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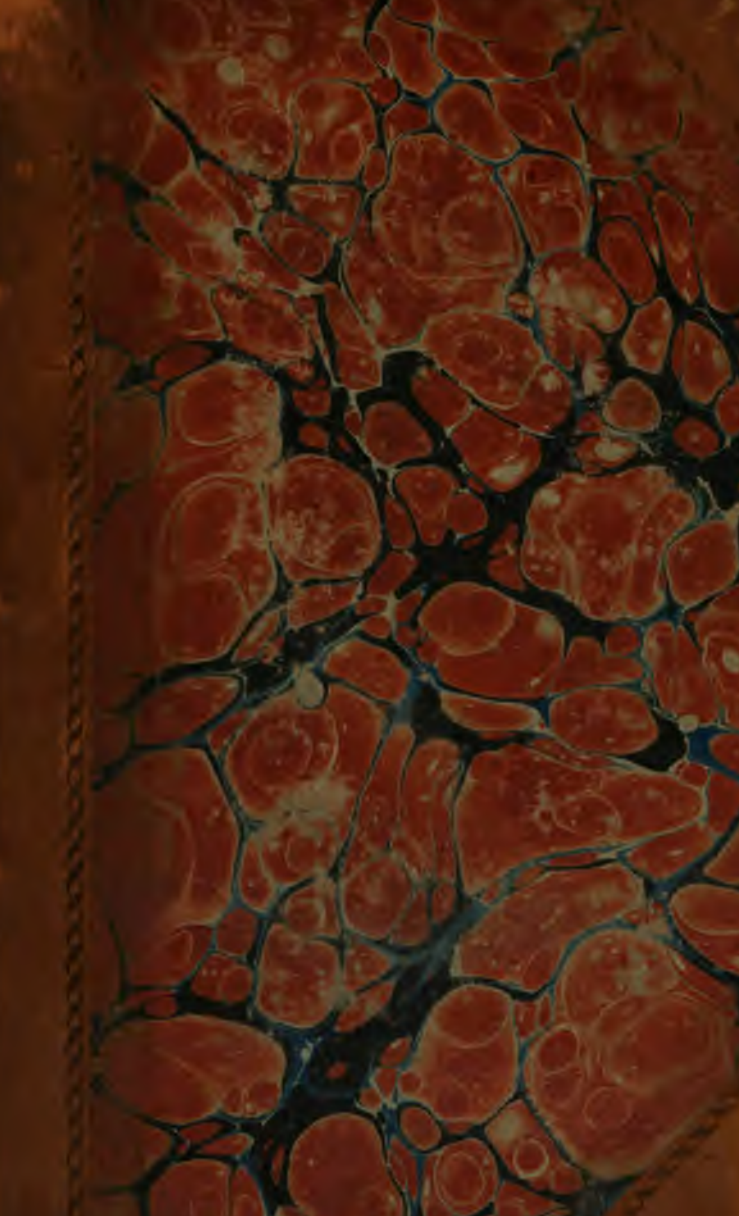
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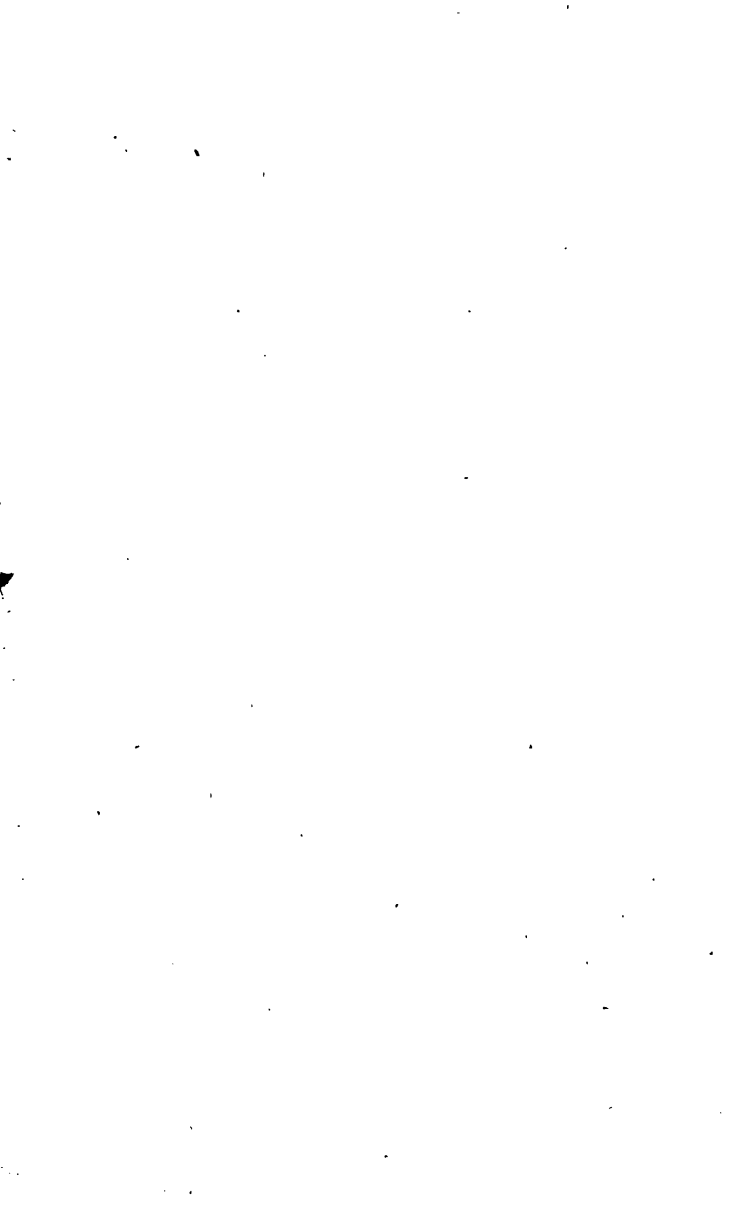
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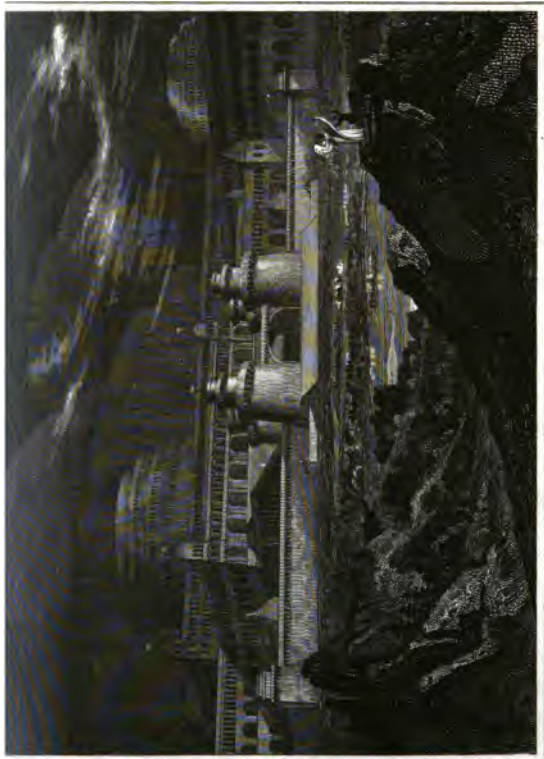












*"A city stood of inconceivable splendour" p. 108.*

*Engraved by G. Cooke from a drawing by J. Martin.*

J. H. 1825

✓

A

# MIDSUMMER DAY'S DREAM.

A. POEM.



BY EDWIN ATHERSTONE,  
AUTHOR OF THE LAST DAYS OF HERCULANEUM,  
AND ABRADATES AND PANTHEA.

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"When Reason sleeps,  
Oft in her absence mimic Fancy wakes  
To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,  
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams."  
*Milton.*

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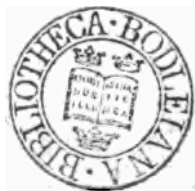
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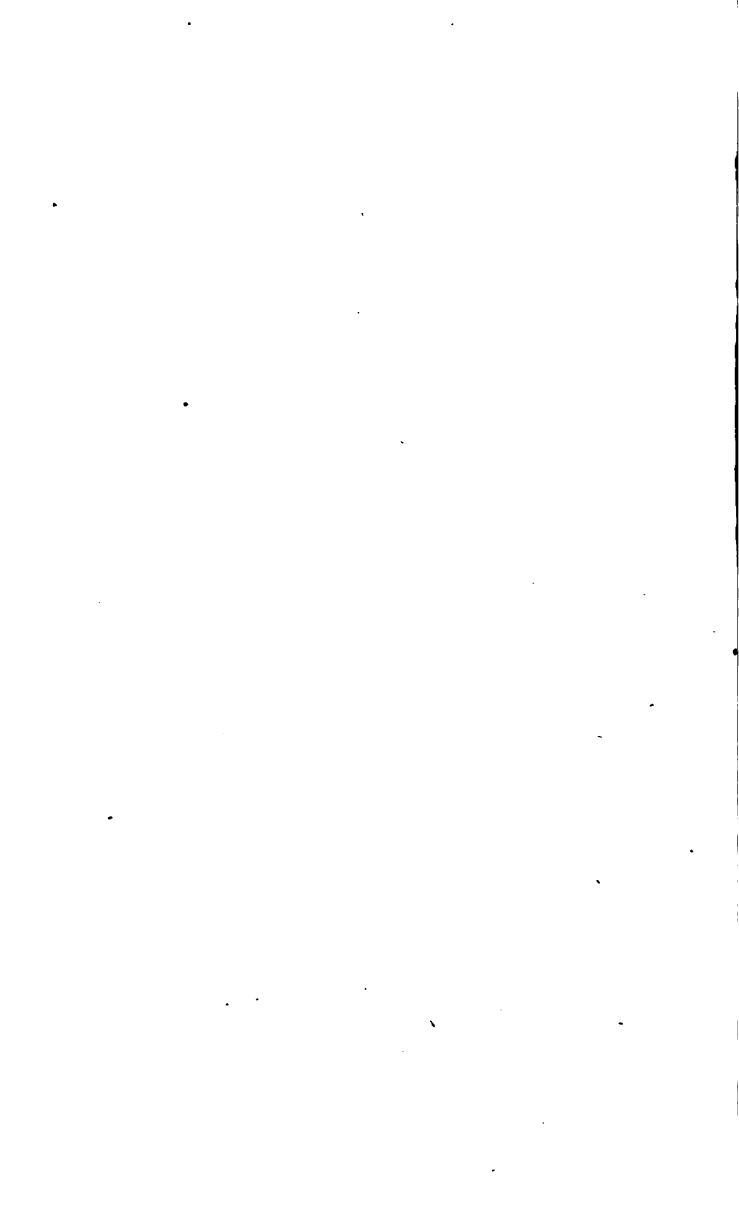
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A

**MIDSUMMER DAY'S DREAM.**

B



A

## MIDSUMMER DAY'S DREAM.

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It was the morning of the merry day  
Of Midsummer ;—the sun was not yet up,  
But the blithe larks were looking out for him ;  
The swallows twitter'd on the cottage thatch ;  
The cocks in neighbouring farm-yards clapp'd their  
wings,  
Answering each other's challenge.

All the night

I had not slept. The casement, open'd wide,  
Let in the pleasant night air ; and the sound  
Of softest waves that linger'd on the beach,  
Washing the sands so gently, 'twas more like

The slow and quiet breath of one who slumbers,  
Than the strong voice of the great deep. And still,  
As I look'd out upon the night, the sea  
Was flat and motionless as glass ; and throng'd  
With bright stars, as it were another sky.  
A ship lay on the dark and smooth expanse,  
Still as a rock.—There was no ripple seen,  
No gentlest swell ;—yet, ever and anon,  
The slow, soft pulse of ocean heavily  
Threw on the beach a sleepy wave ;—then sank  
To rest again. The dark, dim, lofty cliffs  
Hung o'er the deep like drowsy sentinels.  
All nature was in gentle sleep ;—but I  
Wish'd not to sleep. The air was fresh and pure,  
Yet of luxurious warmth ; and luscious scents  
From the new hay, and fields of flowering beans,  
Borne on the slow wings of the unfelt wind ;  
And woodbines from the cottage porch beneath,  
And wall-flowers, whose dark heads were bent with  
dew,

Floated with sweetest interchange.

It seem'd

Ingratitude to all beneficent nature  
To shut out such delicious sights, and sounds,  
And smells, and wrap my senses in dull sleep ;—  
So at my window I had sat all night,  
Silently revelling in that pure bliss.

But, when the sounds of day-break came, I rose  
To climb the loftiest cliff, and watch from thence  
The glorious God of light and heat spring up  
From the blue deep to ride his highest course  
Along the heavens ; resolved this joyful day  
To track him from his rising to his fall.  
This day, said I, I will forget the world,  
Its cares, and guilt, and passions, and will live  
In sunshine and in beauty. So I went  
Through fields and green-bank'd lanes, where the  
spring flowers  
Live on till summer ; now enveloped quite



With hedges over-arching, whose low roof  
And sides, as with a thousand tiny fingers,  
Had from the passing hay-cart pluck'd away  
Its fragrant burthen : catching now through gap  
Or uncouth gate a glimpse of some far vale,  
Steep'd in the grey mist ;—now of some bold cliff  
Standing alone, with nought but the blue sky  
Behind it :—now of the dim quiet sea.

Soon I began with eager foot to climb  
The high cliff, from whose top I might behold  
The glorious spectacle. The short soft grass  
Had caught a plenteous dew : the mountain herbs  
Repaid my rude tread with sweet fragrance : long  
The ascent and steep ; and often did I pause  
To breathe and look around on the rich vales  
And swelling hills, each moment brightening.  
Thus with alternate toil and rest I climb'd  
To the high summit, then walk'd gently on,  
Till by the cliff's precipitous edge I stood.

O, then what glories burst upon my sight !  
The interminable ocean lay beneath  
At depth immense ;—not quiet as before,  
For a faint breath of air, ev'n at the height  
On which I stood scarce felt, play'd over it,  
Waking innumerable dimples on its face,  
As though 'twere conscious of the splendid guest,  
That ev'n then touch'd the threshold of heaven's gates,  
And smiled to bid him welcome. Far away  
To either hand the broad, curved beach stretch'd on ;  
And I could see the slow-paced waves advance  
One after one, and spread upon the sands,  
Making a slender edge of pearly foam  
Just as they broke ;—then softly falling back,  
Noiseless to me on that tall head of rock,  
As it had been a picture, or descried  
Through optic tube leagues off.

A tender mist

Was round th' horizon, and along the vales ;  
But the hill tops stood in a crystal air ;

The cope of heaven was clear and deeply blue,  
And not a cloud was visible. Towards the east  
An atmosphere of golden light, that grew  
Momently brighter, and intensely bright,  
Proclaim'd the approaching sun. Now—now he  
comes :—

A dazzling point emerges from the sea ;  
It spreads ;—it rises :—now it seems a dome  
Of burning gold :—higher and rounder now  
It mounts—it swells :—now like a huge balloon  
Of light and fire, it rests upon the rim  
Of waters ; lingers there a moment ;—then—  
Soars up.—

Exulting I stretch'd forth my arms,  
And hail'd the king of summer. Every hill  
Put on a face of gladness ; every tree  
Shook his green leaves in joy : the meadows laugh'd ;  
The deep glen, where it caught the amber beams,  
Began to draw its misty vale aside,  
And smile and glisten through its pearly tear

The birds struck up their chorus ; the young lambs  
Scour'd over hill and meadow ;—all that lived  
Look'd like a new creation, over-fill'd  
With health and joy ; nay, ev'n the inanimate earth  
Seem'd coming into life.

But glorious far  
Beyond all else the mighty God of light  
Mounting the crystal firmament : no eye  
May look upon his overwhelming pomp :  
Power and majesty attend his steps ;  
Ocean and earth adoring gaze on him :—  
In lone magnificence he takes his way  
Through the bright solitude of heaven.

The sea .  
Was clear and purely blue, save the broad path  
Where the sunbeams danc'd on the heaving billows,  
That seem'd a high-road, paved with atom suns,  
Where, on celestial errands, to and fro,  
'Tween heaven and earth might gods or angels walk.

Here, drinking in with rapture every sight,  
And sound, and odorous smell, from point to point  
Of precipice or rock I walk'd ;—now look'd  
At the white, dazzling cliffs that stood out clear  
And sharp-edged in that bright light, tinted o'er  
With shrubs and flowers ;—now towards some distant  
village,

With its white cottages and simple church  
Half hid in trees :—now on some peak or mount  
Tip-toe I stood, catching with eager sense  
The faint sweet perfume of a neighbouring hill,  
From base to summit all emblazon'd thick  
With golden gorse flowers : now upon the brink  
Of the steep cliff I stood, and look'd below,  
Where lay gigantic ruins, rock on rock  
Up-piled in mimicry of wall and spire ;  
Till, dizzy with contemplating that depth,  
I almost long'd to start and plunge below.  
Now looking forth I saw the playful salmon  
Leaping from out the waves ; the mackerel shoals

Ruffling the surface ; or the unwieldy porpus  
Throwing his huge bulk high from out the waters  
That, as he fell, recoil'd, and flash'd, and rock'd  
In trembling widening circles. Here and there  
The various sea-fowl floated smoothly on,  
Or dived at times to snatch their prey. And now  
The fishermen upon a distant beach  
Were launching their dark boats. Some, just push'd  
off,

Went gliding on like swans : sail after sail  
Rising to catch the scarcely-breathing wind :  
Some they were dragging down the shelving sands  
With measured pull : their hoarse and long-drawn  
shouts

Came faintly up the steep. Now on the waves  
The prow is lifted : now the sailors leap  
Hastily in,—save one, who at the stern  
Stands yet a moment, with his utmost force  
To give the last strong push that makes the keel  
Slide from the grating sands :—he too leaps in :

The oars are snatch'd,—they flash into the water :—  
The white sails one by one are spread,—and now  
Slowly and steadily they steal along.

Soon from a dale below I heard the sound  
Of cheerful voices, and the whetted scythe.  
O ! many a merry joke there seem'd to pass,  
For they laugh'd out right heartily and long ;  
Then bent them to their task ; and all was still,  
Save the scythe's measured hiss ; and, oft between,  
The sharp, clear ringing of the whetted blade,  
Much interrupted for some pleasant word,  
Or side-convulsing laugh, and many a call  
To milkmaid tripping by, and piping loud  
Some merry tune to some disastrous lay :—  
A sweeter music in the early morn,  
Than stirs the haggard dancer's jaded limbs,  
In the unhealthful ball-room, to try yet  
One dear, delightful, toilsome pleasure more.

This day, said I, no roof shall cover me  
But that majestic vault of heaven : no couch,  
No table shall be mine, but the green earth :  
In those fields will I take my simple food,  
And look abroad, and see continually  
The glorious aspects of rejoicing nature,  
And feel her unalloyed presence. Then  
Down to the vale I went, and, as I hoped,  
Met hearty welcome. Frothing milk, just drawn,  
And savoury brown-bread were my morning meal.  
That done, awhile I bask'd amid the hay ;  
Suck'd from the clover-flowers the honey ; traced  
The shining-coated insects in the grass  
Threading their beautiful labyrinth ; or the bee  
Eagerly rifling the fallen flowers, to catch  
Their fragrance ere the hot sun drink it up ;  
Listen'd the little chorus of the gnats,  
And flies innumerable wheeling round and round  
In the warm sunbeam. Now, stretch'd out at length,  
I watch'd the many-colour'd birds that sail'd



With various flight in the ethereal air :  
The lark with quivering wing mounting aloft  
Till my strain'd eye had lost him ; though even then  
His ceaseless song came down, mellow'd and fine,  
And fainter, and yet fainter, till it died :  
The swallow darting to and fro : the hawk,  
Round, and yet round, with slow and wary course  
Gliding ; or hanging like a cloudy speck,—  
Or sinking slow with gently tremulous wing,—  
Or like an arrow rapidly darting down.  
The linnet, and the red-breast, and the thrush,  
The goldfinch, and the little wren, all birds  
That sing and frolic in the sun were there.  
I mark'd their differing motions ; listen'd oft  
To their dissimilar songs, all sung at once,  
Yet without discord. Sometimes far above  
The heron flew with long, slow-flapping wings ;  
Sometimes the cooing wood-pigeon came near ;  
The crow, and sea-gull with his plaintive cry.

Thus long I lay 'mid all delightful sights,  
All lovely sounds : the sun and shade-tinged fields ;  
The gently quivering leaves ; the flower-fill'd hedges ;  
The hills and vales ; the blue immense of sky ;  
The songs of birds ; the softly whispering wind,  
As it brush'd lightly o'er the bowing grass ;  
The far off sighings of the languid waves  
Fainting away on the warm sands ; the scent  
Of the new hay, of clover, and sweet herbs,—  
Wild roses, honeysuckles, eglantines,  
All breathing out their sweet souls to the sun.

Unsatiated with these, yet wishing still  
To taste that day all nature's luxuries,  
I left those pleasant meadows, and went down  
To bathe me in the bright and tempting waves,—  
My daily wont from earliest morn of spring  
Till lingering autumn's last.

O ! ye who go  
Surcharged with meat and wine, to a hot bed,

At midnight, or perchance at early morn ;  
Lie in a gross and apoplectic sleep  
Till the bright sun hath journey'd half the sky ;  
Then rise with trembling limbs and heavy head,  
To talk of "*shatter'd nerves*" and "*wretched health* ;"  
To pour down drugs into your palled stomachs,—  
Ask the grave doctor's counsel, and bemoan  
Your sickly frames ;—would you indeed be heal'd,  
There's a physician who exacts no fee,  
Who gives no nauseous drugs, and who still warns  
And counsels you ; but ye attend her not.  
'Tis Nature ! she prescribes you temperance  
And exercise. Have ye indulged in foods  
Or slothfulness ? she visits you with pain  
Or sickness. Have your meals been simple, few,—  
Not eaten to delight a pamper'd palate,  
But satiate hunger earn'd by exercise  
In the pure air ?—why then she gives you strength,—  
A clear and active mind,—a spirit free  
As school-boy's on a holiday,—a foot

Ready to start for far-off hill or dale ;  
For walk by hushing moonlight, or beneath  
The brilliant, burning noon-tide sun ; a feat  
To overpower the feeble-footed sluggard,  
Or bloated epicure. If ye love not  
Your indigestions and your bilious aches,—  
Up, sluggard, and gross feeder, with the sun ;  
Or in the morning's prime, while yet the dews  
Jewel the meadows :—to the brook repair,  
Or the sea-side ; plunge boldly in, for health  
Is there, like gold within the mine ; but both  
Lie underneath the surface. Then set forth  
With brisk tread for the fields, or up the rocks ;  
No languid lady's saunter, often check'd  
That she may breathe, and rest her delicate limbs,  
Tired with some half mile's journey ; but with step  
Rapid and unabating, till the heart  
Sends the warm life-stream dancing through the  
veins ;  
Flushing the cheek, and brightening up the eye.

Then for a simple, but a hearty meal,  
Grateful, thus earn'd, and wholesome:—next with  
books,  
Or friends, an hour or two ; then exercise  
Again, and plain repast:—thus through the day ;  
And let night find you early at your rest,  
Unheated by full meals, or beds of down:—  
So shall pure slumbers visit you ; and health,  
And buoyant spirits, wake with you at morn.

As I approach'd the hot and steaming beach,  
The waves, that from the cliff's top had appear'd  
Small as the circles on a quiet pond  
Made by a dipping fly, were now of strength  
To make an anchor'd boat rock to and fro  
With slow, full swing: the pleasanter to him  
Who loves to dally with them, and to ride  
Their swelling backs. There is a luxury  
That city feasters, and room-keeping souls,  
And those that shiver if a breath of air

Thread their close folded garments, cannot know ;  
When on a summer's day, morn, noon, or eve,  
The bather stands retired beside clear stream,  
Or ever-whispering beach, and, one by one,  
Throws off his heating garments, stopping oft  
To cool, and watch the swelling waves, or stream  
Crisping and sparkling ; till, the last thin screen  
Cast by, he stands an instant, free as first  
Adam, ere sin brought shame ; then he looks down  
A moment on the enticing waters ; longs  
To leap, yet almost wishes to delay  
The certain joy ;—now a few steps retires ;—  
Draws one full breath ;—bounds lightly on, and  
springs.

Then for the plunge—the sinking down—the boom  
Of waters closing o'er his head—the rise  
To air and light again—the quick rebound  
Of the dash'd waves ;—and then the outstretch'd  
limbs,

Easily poisoning him, or oaring on,  
As fancy wills :—now motionless he floats,  
With arms thrown back, and swelling chest, and eyes  
Gazing awhile upon the glorious sky,—  
A double pleasure ;—now with quick stroke turns ;  
On this side, and on that, cuts smoothly on ;—  
Now prone, and now supine :—with head erect  
He treads the waters now as on the land ;  
Now plunges down, and dives along beneath  
The waves, that tell not of his track below ;  
Anon emerges at some distant spot  
To take fresh breath, and wanton o'er and o'er,  
Till, satiate and cool, he comes at last  
Dripping and glistening to the shore or bank.

How different then his healthy glow from heat  
Of a late morning bed, or smoky fire  
That dries the wholesome juices up, and stains  
The once clear cheek like the Egyptian mummy ;  
Or the dry heat by wine, or ardent drinks,

Given to the cold, dull mass of diseas'd clay !  
How different the warmth, when the pure blood  
Dances away through vein and artery,  
Driven by a healthy, natural impulse  
From the free beating heart to every nerve !  
From head to foot all is delicious glow ;  
The lungs breathe deep and clear ; the eye is bright ;  
The spirits bounding ; every muscle braced  
For toil or boisterous exercise : the mind  
Sees not as through a fog, but through the clear,  
Warm, painting sunshine : every object takes  
A renew'd beauty : hill, and vale, and flower,  
Green, shady lane, and twilight wood at noon ;  
Close bower for study, or high mountain's top,  
To look abroad upon the expanding earth,  
With soul expanding also,—lake and river,  
And ocean with its ever-varying face,  
And the magnificent vaulted roof of Heaven ;—  
All take renew'd and intense loveliness,  
Such as in life's first years they had, when all



We saw or felt was joyous, all to come  
Was bright and happy.—

What the bather feels  
In his most favour'd hours of luxury,  
Was mine that morning.—

Satisfied at length,  
I left the pleasant pastime, and return'd,  
Refresh'd and light, to the cliff's highest top.  
Thence I look'd out again with new delight  
On the unbounded glittering sea. White sails  
On every side were bellying to the breeze :  
Like spirits of the element, they went  
On their smooth, noiseless way, gliding. Sea-fowl  
Were wafting on the water's very face,  
Seeming to touch it ; or, as if asleep,  
Rested their soft breasts on the softer waves,  
That breathed their lullaby. Beside the shore  
Others walk'd stately, pausing oft to pick  
Amid the watery sands their food. The gulls

Couch'd in the crannies of the cliffs, 'or stood  
Erect on rocky shelf, or jutting point,  
Looking with mild eye and inclining head  
Above, below, around ; headforemost then  
One plunges—then another—down the abyss,  
Uttering sweet sounding cries that die away  
As they descend ; till, with long, curving sweep,  
And nicely balancing wings, into the waves  
They drop down gently.

Over the blue vault  
Some delicate white clouds came slowly swimming,  
And threw their gliding shadows on the deep,  
Like fairy islands floating by a spell :  
Nay, the bright sea itself, the rocks and sky,  
Seem'd an enchanted vision,—beautiful,  
And grand, and gorgeous more than common earth.

The sunbeams, now intolerably bright,  
Glancing and quivering on the restless waves,  
Seem'd there creating star-like suns as bright—

Created in a moment, and extinct :—

Myriads at once flash'd on the dazzled eye ;

Myriads were quenched at once, and myriads more

Blazed suddenly here—there—and every where.

Nought seem'd substantial in this intense light

But light itself: the wide expanse of earth,

And wider ocean, seem'd unweighty things,

Buoy'd on another ocean circumfused

Of dense light ;—nay, the very dome of heaven

Seem'd floating like an ark on that bright flood.

The hill tops, and the surface of the plains,

And dim horizon's outline, waved and trembled

Beneath the hot rays like a rippling stream.

It was the hour of noon : the God of day  
Stood on the summer's pinnacle ; from thence  
With each succeeding morning to descend  
Till he sink down in winter's lowest vale :  
For ever changing, yet, to healthy minds,  
Bringing with every change a new delight.

Such love the summer's brilliant morn, hot noon,  
And balmy evening, and perfumed night ;  
They love beginning autumn, with its fruits  
And golden harvest fields ;—they love its fall,  
Its chilly evenings, and its dropping leaves,  
Bringing soft melancholy thoughts ;—they love  
The winter's cheerful fire-side eve, its bright,  
And crisp, and spangled fields in morning frost ;  
Its silent-dropping snows, its pelting showers,  
The mighty roaring of its tempests, heard  
At midnight, waking from a gentle sleep,  
Glad to be so awaked ; for solemn thoughts,  
And pleasing awe, come then upon the soul.  
And infant spring they love ; its delicate flowers,  
Its tender springing grass, and swelling buds,  
Its soft rains, and its flitting clouds, and glints  
Of joyous sunshine.

But of all most sweet  
That lovely time when spring and summer meet,

Delightful May, and the young days of June ;  
When all the bloom and freshness of the spring  
Meet all the summer's bright voluptuousness,  
Forming a climate such as in the fields  
Of unpolluted Eden.

O ! to breathe  
The nectar'd air of a clear morn in May,  
Treading the gorgeous meadows ; or to sit  
In blissful meditation, drinking deep  
The warm, rich incense of a night in June,  
Is earth's least earthly joy !

And such a night  
Is even now. The sun an hour ago  
Went down without a cloud ; and, sinking, saw  
His gentle partner in the eastern heaven,  
Rising with radiant brow : and now she pours  
Her golden light on the thick-foliaged trees,  
And brightens the far hills that girdle round

This most enchanting valley\*. A light mist,  
So light 'tis almost viewless, gathers o'er  
Those meadows, crowded with spring flowers: I hear  
A hundred nightingales, remote and nigh.  
How beautiful!—here, in a poplar bower,  
Entwined thick with jessamine and rose,  
Clymatis, and the sweet-breath'd honeysuckle,  
I sit alone in a luxurious gloom;  
And close above my head one joyous bird  
Pours fearlessly a loud triumphant song;  
And, as he pauses, far away I hear  
Unnumber'd delicate answerings, jocund trills,  
And low, soft breathings; and the swell and fall  
Of gently-talking waters. O! this hour  
Is worth a thousand days in gaudy courts,  
Or noisy cities.

Every season thus  
Hath for the healthy mind its proper charm;

\* The Vale of Tone, Somerset.

But to the soul diseased by avarice,  
Worthless ambition, cankering envy, guilt,  
Or fashion's paltry follies, nature shows  
No beauties. If the splendid July sun  
Burn in the cloudless heaven,—why—*then they wear*  
*Cool dresses* :—if a fragrant May-shower fall,  
*They know 'tis well to carry their silk screen,*  
*Lest they be wetted* :—does the thunder lift  
His awful voice?—they stir not then abroad,  
*For lightning sometimes kills* :—is the night dark,  
And still, and solemn?—'tis to them *a sign*  
*That lanterns will be needed* :—does the wind  
Rock the strong trees, and battle in the sky,  
Rolling the ponderous clouds, and making shake  
Houses to their foundations?—then they fear  
*Chimneys may fall, or ships be wreck'd, and goods*  
*Go to the bottom.*

O, unhappy men!—

Ye drain the lees, and smack your lips ; then scoff,  
Or, may be, pity him who quaffs the wine :—

Ye rake the kennels for the glittering earth,  
Deeming yourselves wise, prudent, thriving men ;  
And marvel such should be who love sweet air,  
And rambles on the hills, and by the brooks,  
And beds on the new hay. What, if the fields  
Are studded, thick as stars on frosty night,  
With violets, primroses, daffodils,  
Gold-cups, or sweetest cowslips,—what is this  
To you ? will't raise the price of stocks ? invent  
Some gaudy fashion ? make your mortgage safe ?—  
Will't blast some envied rival's fame, or keep  
Your victim in your clutches ?—No.—What then  
Can these import to you ?—Ye see them not,  
For ye haunt noisy streets, or factories,  
Markets, guildhalls, heated assembly rooms,  
Or Babel-like exchanges :—if ye tread  
The spangled fields, most likely 'tis to slay  
The innocent birds, or hunt the timid hare,—  
And that is *sport* :—the diamond-studded grass



*But wets your shoes ; and all that gorgeous show  
Of flowers you say is not good food for cattle !—*

Mistaken men !—too prudent to be wise ;  
Too thriving to be rich in real wealth ;  
Too fond of heartless levities to be gay ;  
Consent to throw your gravity aside,  
Your ledgers, and your idle fopperies  
Awhile each day :—get out into the air,  
And smell the flowers, and climb upon the hills :—  
Take books into the woods, and leave your guns ;  
The birds will give you music, and the leaves  
Will whisper wisdom to you :—sit you down  
On the sweet grass, or on some bending branch,  
And watch the twinkling crystal of the brook,  
Where the sun pierces the o'erhanging boughs :—  
Look at the silvery glitter of the fish,  
That dart, and flash, or rest their elegant shapes  
With outspread, poising fins, floating asleep

In some still, sunny pool :—but take not there  
The cruel angle-rod :—they feel like you  
Pain from the tearing steel ; like you they love  
To feed and play in their own element.  
Do thus, and know, if your last testament  
Give to your thankless heirs a thousand less,—  
Or if your name at morning visitings,  
Or evening gossip, be less mix'd with talk  
Of the last fashion'd coat or gown, yet you  
Will have been healthier, happier, better men.

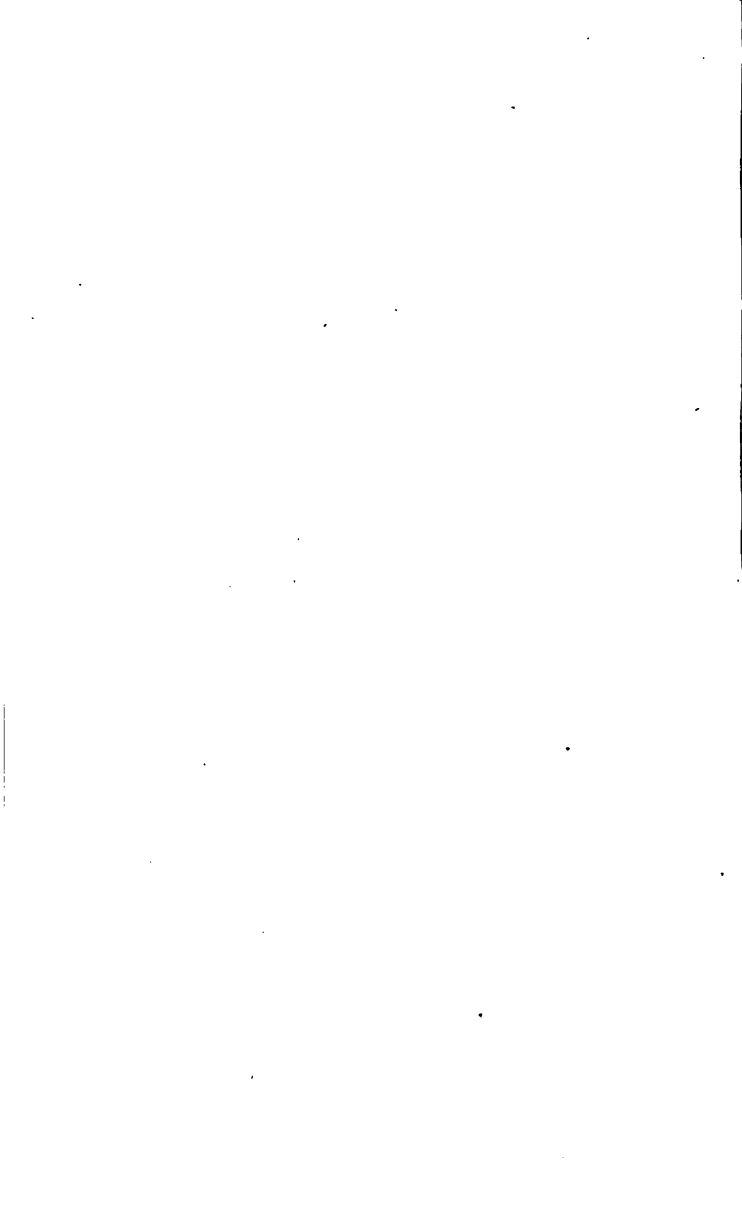
It was the hour of noon : the God of day  
Stood on the highest pinnacle of heaven,  
Glorious, majestic, inexpressibly bright.  
His torrid beams seem'd as they would dissolve  
The solid earth, and drink the ocean up :  
The herbs and flowers bow'd down their fainting heads ;  
The cattle lay asleep beneath the shade  
Of drooping trees :—the distant rocks, and hills,  
And fields, were cover'd with a shining mist ;

The gossamer trail'd its lazy length along :  
All sounds came through the hot, thick, steaming air,  
Deaden'd and indistinct. It was an hour  
Voluptuously to give up all the soul  
To the intoxicating sense of life  
Pervading the whole frame, whose every atom  
Seem'd with a separate consciousness endow'd,  
And drinking in delight.—To breathe, to look,  
To move, were acts of pleasure ; to lie still,  
Feeling at every pore the sunny warmth,  
And the rich breezes, like an odorous bath  
Of softest, lightest waters, playing round  
The happy limbs ; or loitering in the hair ;  
Or in the echoing porches of the ear  
Breathing a thousand gentle whisperings,  
Or sighs most musical ; or tiny laughings ;  
Or beautiful babblings, as of airy tongues  
Heard from afar :—O, it was all delight !  
And thus I lay on the soft, fragrant grass ;  
A purple heath-flower bush beneath my head ;

The bright sun shining on me ; far below  
The languid billows to the silent air  
Making faint moans. I gazed on the pure sky  
With half-shut eyes awhile, travelling in thought  
Th' infinitude of space, and had attain'd  
To other worlds, and other suns and stars,  
When suddenly a deep sleep fell upon me,  
And thus I dream'd.



## **THE DREAM.**



## THE DREAM.

---

Methought that, as I lay,  
A shape of dazzling light stood over me ;  
His stature more than man's, but full of grace  
And indescribable beauty. Gold-tinged locks,  
That shone like sunbeams, round his temples curl'd,  
And cluster'd in his neck ; his ample brow  
Was pure and open as the cloudless heaven ;  
His eye gazed on me with a bright, soft fire,  
Like the first sun-tints on some mountain's peak  
Seen from the vales below, ere day hath risen.



He seem'd not flesh like man, nor yet mere air ;  
But like some glorious thing of light create,  
Rosy with morn's first blush. High majesty  
He had ; but therewith blended a divine  
Softness, benignity, and gracefulness :  
And, where he stood, I mark'd the slender grass,  
That would have bent beneath an insect's weight,  
Standing unbow'd, and freely vibrating  
To every sighing breeze.

He spake at length :—

The tones were tender as the lightest pulse  
Of that sweet harp touch'd by the delicate fingers  
Of spirits of the air, yet had a power  
Upon my soul like low-discoursing thunder  
Heard in the still night : with that power a charm  
Like woman's voice, when in the deep repose  
Of summer's twilight she first owns her love.  
I could not fear, for 'twas not terrible ;  
I could not love, for it was too majestic ;

But I could deeply, fervently admire,  
And bow my spirit down as when I gaze  
At midnight on the unfathomable deep  
Of ether, spangled with its myriad fires.  
Thus the melodious-voiced one spake ; and the air  
Took fragrance from his rosy-tinted lips.

“ Thou art a son of earth, and earthly eyes  
See nought but what is earthly. The fine shapes  
Ethereal that people this fair world  
And the vast universe, ye cannot see :  
Ye can behold the rich vermilion clouds  
Of morning and of eve, but cannot view  
The beautiful spirits that therein reside,  
And make them beautiful. Ye can see the flowers,  
Their shapes and colours, and your other sense  
Perceives their odorous exhalations ; but  
The forms from your thick sight are hid, that mould  
Their elegant fabric, paint their various hues,

And breathe into them perfume. When the wind  
Wails through the gloomy forest, ye see not  
The solemn spirit on the lonely hill  
Making that mournful music. Ye can hear  
The voice of thunders, thronging waves, and groans  
Of earthquakes ; but ye never could behold,  
And live, the terrible and mighty powers  
That work them.

“ All the earth, the sea, the sky,  
Have many such ; your fellow planets too  
That roll like yours round yon magnificent sun :—  
He also hath ethereal ministers  
That do his errands here and through all space,  
Subjected to his influence. One of these  
I am.

“ To us, whose purer elements  
Are all unfetter'd by gross matter, time  
And space are nought, or almost nought ; for we  
Are not ethereal quite. That highest Spirit

Whom *we* name not, but, thinking of, bow down,—  
That Highest One alone is spirit pure.  
Yet farthest space by us is quicker spann'd  
Than by man's quickest thought. Pass in your mind  
Around the globe,—o'er seas and continents  
Speed with a glance,—yet our fleet essences  
Shall reach the goal before you.

“ When, o'ercome

By the hot blaze of day, and lull'd by sounds  
Of drowsy earth and waves, you laid you down  
To rest on this soft bank, even then was I  
On the sun's orb, awaiting the command  
To visit earth ; for on this day we hold  
A festival, and all the spirits that wait  
Upon the summer, giving it its flowers,  
And balmy airs, and dews, and rosy skies,  
Pour this day all their treasures out, rejoicing ;  
Yet, ere your languid senses had sunk down  
In slumber, I had shot athwart the fields

Of ether 'twixt yon sun and this your globe,—  
A distance inconceivable by thought  
Of man, though he hath number'd it in words  
Pronounc'd as easily as if he took  
The altitude of a mole-hill, but no more  
Conceived thus than when he names *infinity*,  
And thinks that measures it.

“ The race of earth

Love beings moulded like themselves of earth :  
Existences more subtile are too fine  
For their gross sympathies. Th' ethereal race  
Love also more peculiarly the things  
Compounded like themselves, yet they disdain not  
To hold at times communion with mankind ;  
Partly that with man's clay a spirit like theirs,  
Though much inferior, is join'd, aspiring  
Oft-times to noble speculations ; partly  
That higher natures look with pitying eye  
On human weakness, and would aid the worm

To put on wings, and voyage through the air,  
If its gross nature make it not prefer  
To crawl the dirty ground.

“ With some few men  
Of highest intellect, and thereto join'd  
The highest virtue, that enlarged love,  
That makes them see in all the race of men  
One family; that bids them gently judge  
Their fellow's weakness, knowing that themselves  
Are weak; that teaches pity even for guilt;  
(For who can know how circumstance, or error,  
Venial perhaps at first, hath led the wretch  
Step after step, resisting, but compell'd?  
For who can know how, in the course from fault  
To crime, he hath endured agony,  
Remorse, and shame?—how virtuous purposes  
Have risen within him,—resolutions great  
For future days, only to fall in turn,  
As others fell, from force of outward thing

And strain the rack-wheel of remorse and shame  
To more endureless torture?)—

—with such men

The spirits of the elements have oft  
Commun'd, and giv'n to their frail sense a power  
To see the beautiful and mighty workings  
Of Nature, else invisible to man.  
Such favour'd men their fellows reverence,  
And call them great and godlike, and their names  
Are glorious through long ages.

“ But there are

Who, lacking the high mind, and knowing nought  
But a warm love for nature's visible charms,  
Have yet by some kind spirit been indulged  
With glimpses of her hidden loveliness ;  
And therefore do I visit thee to show  
Thy feeble, but admiring eyes the things  
That are around thee ; for th' ethereal shapes  
That tend these cliffs and glens, and those pure  
waters,

Tell how from earliest morn, nay through the night,  
Thou hast been giving up thy soul to feel  
Nature's divine delights on this bright day,  
The brightest of the year. Now, up! and look  
With a new sight about thee."

At these words

Methought I started up and saw——Oh heavens!  
What words can tell the infinite delight  
Of that fine vision! All the hills and vales  
Teem'd with celestial shapes: the skies and waters  
Were throng'd with them. Some rode upon the sea,  
And, where they touch'd, the waves grew suddenly  
bright,  
And crisp'd and danced. Some skimm'd along its face,  
With graceful windings bending here and there;  
Now slow and languidly,—now shooting out  
Right o'er the deep to the horizon's edge,  
Diminish'd in an instant to a point,  
Yet to my strengthen'd sight still visible.  
There, on that delicate line where sea and sky



Seem blending, I could trace their mazy flight  
Like atoms in the sunbeam ; and anon,  
Ere I could speak, again they rode the waves  
Close to the shore. Thousands along the sky  
In all directions flew, yet without wings,  
As if the will alone impell'd them on.  
Some gently sail'd along on the mid air ;  
And if they pass'd at times a thin white cloud,  
It would expand, and take a rosy tint,  
Like a pale virgin's blush. Some from the sea  
Sprang up at once with perpendicular flight  
Into the heavens, and there, no more to view  
Than the small insects floating in the air  
On summer's evening after rain, they flew  
In mazy windings ; then again glanced down  
In straight or curved track ; or took sometimes  
A flight still upward, and dissolved at once  
In the infinite distance.

Here in groups they sport,  
Pursuing and pursued ; or, forming rings,

They tread the air in merry dance, and still  
Fly as they tread,—now sideways, now aloft,  
Now down, and up again ; and some I saw  
Seated on ruby clouds, that gave them music—  
As seem'd—from glittering harps, though yet my ear,  
Ungifted, heard it not :—and then again,  
As I look'd on the hills, the woods, the vales,  
The same bright forms were there,—not all alike  
In size and hue : some were of infant stature,  
With rosy cheek, and ever-laughing eye ;  
These chiefly sported on the flowery banks,  
And brush'd along the tops of the tall grass,  
That sway'd and sparkled where they flew. Some  
were

Like virgins in the blossom of their youth,  
Of inexpressible loveliness : these lay  
In the rich vales, beneath the shade of trees,  
Or floated at their ease along the meadows,  
Couch'd on the air : where'er they moved, the flowers  
Bow'd down their tender heads, all—faint with bliss

'Neath that luxurious presence. Others wound  
Among the woods, their bright shapes gleaming  
through

The thick shade, and upon the quivering leaves  
Casting by fits a sunny glow. But some,  
Of noblest form and height, were of the hues  
Of those most gorgeous clouds that shrine the sun  
At morn or eve, and of each delicate tint  
Blended between them. These along the sky  
Moved chiefly,—glorious shapes of fire!—lighting  
The heavens where'er they flew, and casting down  
Upon the hills and waves all radiant hues.

“Those whom thy pleas'd eye tracks along the air,”  
My mild instructor said, “are such as I,  
Dwellers within the sun: they are come down  
On this bright holiday to give to earth  
Increased splendour, suited to the time  
When their great ruler comes in all his pomp  
To mount his summer's throne.

“ But, not to tell

The mysteries of their several agencies,—  
Too deep for thee, if told, to comprehend,—  
I show these beautiful visions, but that thou  
May'st truly know how lovely Nature is.  
Yet thou hast only seen ; but there are sounds,  
That earthly ears hear not, as beautiful  
As these fine sights,—these also thou shalt know.  
Thine ears are open'd : hear ethereal music.”

As when a man who from his birth has lived  
In blindness, knowing not the glorious forms  
And hues of nature, powerless to conceive  
The immensity of ocean, the bright sun, .  
And the majestic arch of heaven, its blaze  
At noon, or deep repose at night, when all  
The stars are twinkling silently and clear ;—  
As when, by skilful hand the darkening spots  
Remov'd, he first looks forth and feels the rush  
Of beauty on his soul from the green earth,

The many-colour'd flowers, the rolling sea,  
The mazy landscape, towering hills and vales,  
Rivers and woods, and human form divine,  
And the all-embracing firmament of heaven,—  
Then knowing first what blindness is ;—even so  
On me, when that bright spirit ceased, there came  
A new and overwhelming sense : it seem'd  
As if the earth, and air, and heavens were made  
Only for music ; for above, below,  
Around, all breathed forth harmony. The waves  
Sent up with every swell a joyful voice,  
Rolling about in multitudinous chorus :  
From the rich vales and glens delicious sounds  
Arose like exhalations ; the hill tops  
Chanted aloud in the clear air ; from trees,  
And herbs, and flow'rs, and the slow-waving grass.  
Innumerable and perpetual melodies  
Floated about like perfume on the air :  
The winds were nought but music ; every cloud  
As it sail'd o'er, sent a soft song to earth ;

The murmuring of the sea-shore was a hymn  
Sung by sweet voices ; every chafed pebble  
Rang with a crystal tinkling as it roll'd ;  
The thin noon mist rose with a gentle swell  
Of music exquisitely faint and dim,  
Like the first doubtful tint of morning light  
On the pure ether, when the watching shepherd  
Looks towards the eastern heaven, and asks himself  
“ Is that the daybreak ? ” All the air and sky  
O'erflow'd with whispering melodies ; each breeze  
Seem'd like a concert of sweet instruments  
Struck by invisible hands that hurried by.

Then, too, of all those fine ethereal shapes  
I heard the ecstatic voices, and the harps  
Struck by the cloud-throned spirits to the tread  
Of jocund dancers in the sky, though they  
Needed not such, for every moving limb  
Made its own music, and their voices kept  
Perpetual song.

Thus could I with delight  
Have look'd and listen'd, with still craving eye  
And ear, for ever feasting,—never full,—  
For months, for years ; but now the gentle spirit  
That show'd me these began, and to his voice  
My pleased ear turn'd.

“ But a small space of earth  
Thou hast beheld ; yet, in whatever part  
'Tis now high summer, the same lovely forms  
Keep festival. But we will hence, and thou  
Shalt go to the deep waters, and shalt see  
What thou unharm'd *canst* see : the depths of earth  
Thou also shalt behold. But I must change  
Thy mortal clay, and give thee for awhile  
A shape of airy fabric, that thou may'st  
Descend into the heart of sea and earth,  
Or dart across the firmament, or up  
Through boundless space.”

Even as he spake I felt  
My flesh dissolving, as a water drop

Turns in the hot sun to invisible air.  
Oh ! what ineffable bliss methought it was  
To live uncumber'd thus by clay ; to have  
Keen love for all that's grand and beautiful  
In this sublime creation, and a power  
To see and know it all ; to be at once  
Where thought is ; in the inmost heart of earth,  
Or in the deep seas, or the crystal skies,  
Or in new worlds and suns. But thus again  
The ethereal nature spake.

“ The tenement

Of earth wherein thy spirit dwells is now  
Sublimed like ours to a thin essence, less  
In power and beauty, as before it was,  
But gifted like our own to fly through space,  
To pierce the solid, to endure the breath  
Of polar winter, or the fiercest rage  
Of fire, unharm'd. The elements have now  
No influence upon thee : the soft breeze  
Passes, and feels no stop where thou art. Look !



Thy substance casts no shadow on the ground ;  
The sunbeams through thee go as through the air ;  
Yet dost thou see, and hear, and think, and move,  
Though with no mortal organs. But, away !  
I see thee all impatient to put forth  
Thy new-conferred powers : give me thy hand."

This said, he sprang up with me high in air,  
And in an instant all the spacious view  
That I had gazed on, wondering,—hills, and rocks,  
And far-stretch'd plains, and the expanse of sea,—  
Look'd like a little plot of garden ground  
Standing within a lake. Had I retain'd  
Mere mortal sight, our speed had blinded me ;  
Nor can I tell but with slow course of words  
What in the doing fill'd no smallest point  
Of time. A thousand leagues of land and sea  
Were spread below us ; and before the eye  
Could on the smallest map have traversed  
From Africa to Spain—lo ! we had flown

Sheer over seas and islands, and vast fields  
Of ever-during frost ; and stood at last  
Upon the summit of a mountain, high  
As Etna on Olympus, bright and clear  
As crystal.

The immense expanse of view  
Show'd nought but icy mountains, strangely heap'd ;  
Rugged and sharp, and of all wildest shapes ;  
Beauteous in their disorder ; brilliant  
With all the bright and tender hues that flash,  
And glow, and tremble in the diamond.

The sun, which we had left in highest heaven,  
Now just above th' horizon stood, and threw  
His level rays on the clear tinted heads  
Of the crystal mountains, leaving the deep dells  
Of never melted snow in a soft dark.  
There was intensest silence ; not a breath  
Of air ; no life ; no motion visible :  
The cloudless sky was infinitely pure ;

And, farthest from the sun, I could discern  
The struggling sparkle of some brilliant stars,  
That shone in spite of day.

“ Now thou hast known,”

My radiant guide began, “ how spirits pass  
Through space. An instant back we left the shore  
Of southern Britain, with the sun in midst  
Of heaven ; and now we stand upon the peak  
Of the North Pole, and the slow moving sun  
Hath, like a falling meteor, sunk behind us,  
Down to th' horizon. Here, through half the year,  
He never sets ; but round and round the sky  
Glides like a watching guard ; then, when he sinks,  
Again through half the year he rises not ;  
And night continual, and terrific tempests,  
Hang o'er this region now so beautiful,  
So bright and tranquil.

“ Thou hast heard the sound  
Of rushing storms, and seen the ocean shook,—  
Its billows dash'd above the brim, as 'twere

Some petty bowl o'erfill'd, that thy least touch  
Would make o'erwash its edge :—thou hast beheld  
The pines bow'd down, and the unbending oak  
Dragg'd, crashing, from his socket ; the vast forests  
Leaning and swinging round, as their strong trunks  
Were stubble only :—thou hast heard them groan,  
And crack, and roar beneath the torturing wind ;  
But, to the terrors of the polar storm,  
These are but May-day zephyrs. The oak here,  
When the unimaginable fury came,  
Would dance upon the air, as the least twig  
Upon the stream. The strong and deep cast towers,  
That barely tremble in your fiercest winds,  
Biding the pelting of a thousand years,  
Would fall before a blast.

“ Look where we stand :—  
Seems not this glittering mountain, with its bulk  
Immense, and fearful altitude, to rest  
Firm as a continent ?—And so it doth :—  
But where are its foundations ?—In the bed,

Of ocean, leagues below the surface, bound  
In ever-during frost. The tempest there  
Can never reach ; but these high pinnacles,  
Mountains themselves, are split and dash'd down  
                    headlong

In its terrific rage : and there are hills  
Thou may'st discern, far in the utmost distance—  
Hundreds of miles away—as bright as these,  
And seemingly as irremovable :—  
They also rest upon the ocean ;—all  
That thou canst see is ocean ;—but they stand not  
Like these, foundation'd in the uttermost deeps.  
They in the tempest's anger are lift up  
Like bubbles. When the troubled sea first swells,  
They stand awhile unshook, fast chain'd together  
Down to their base : but the thick plains of ice  
Begin to heave, bending, and going back  
Laboriously. Anon, a groan like thunder  
Is heard far underneath, running along  
From hill to hill ; but nought appears above

Save that slow, long, and heavy lift, as though  
The ice-deep then were coming into life,  
And swell'd with its first breath. But soon again  
Another groan is heard—another yet :—  
The whole mass, plain and mountain, slowly rocks :  
Thunders and crashings shoot along all round ;—  
At length the prison'd deep, gathering in wrath,  
Bursts up its icy-ceiling with a roar  
Like a thousand thunders, rushing fiercely through,  
Foaming and hissing. Ponderous sheets of ice  
Rise up,—and clash together,—and fall back,—  
And come again,—and split,—and shiver to dust.  
Then the loos'd mountains float ; slowly at first,  
With gentle rise and fall ; and, if they touch,  
They grind together harshly, and go back  
Heavily trembling. But if in its rage  
The storm advances, they begin to mount,  
And sink, and swing their huge heads to and fro,  
Like ships at anchor on a rolling sea ;—  
Higher and higher they go up, and lower

And lower yet they sink ;—they clash ; they split ;—  
Down come the shivering pinnacles, and beat  
The spray up to the clouds ;—and the angry sea  
Roars,—and the winds howl awfully :—the hail  
Hisses ;—and clouds of snow dash heavily down,  
Like waves of curded foam. The heavens are black  
As pitch ; but ever and anon there comes  
From the encountering hills a stream of fire,  
That now seems lightning in the clouds, and now  
A flame within th' abyss : so high they soar,  
So low again they sink.

“ Such is the rage  
Of polar storms. Man never hath beheld—  
And *could* not view them. Thy new-moulded form  
Feeleth not fire nor frost ; but couldst thou stand  
With mortal body for one instant here,  
In the keen wintry night, thy breath would fall  
In snow-flakes, and thine eyes be frozen stiff  
Ere thou couldst close them : but man could not live  
To breathe or look ; for, as the lightning strikes

With instantaneous death, so suddenly  
That intense blast would turn the flesh to stone.

“ Yet have these awful regions, even in depth  
Of winter, beautiful scenes that milder climes  
Know not. The winds are sometimes hush'd as now ;  
The crystal mountains, and the snowy dells,  
Lie motionless and silent, as if they  
Through all eternity had stood unshaken :  
The skies are deeply pure ; the thronging stars  
Burn dazzlingly ; and those innumerable hills,  
With their clear spires, and pinnacles, and domes,  
And pyramids grotesque, reflect them back  
With shifting and incessant twinklings, bright  
As if they were all frosted o'er with stars  
Of all fine colours. Glorious meteors too  
Sail through the air, and wind among the hills,  
Kindling them gorgeously. If thou couldst stand  
At such a time where now thou art, thine eye  
Would view a splendid sight. Through the low vales,

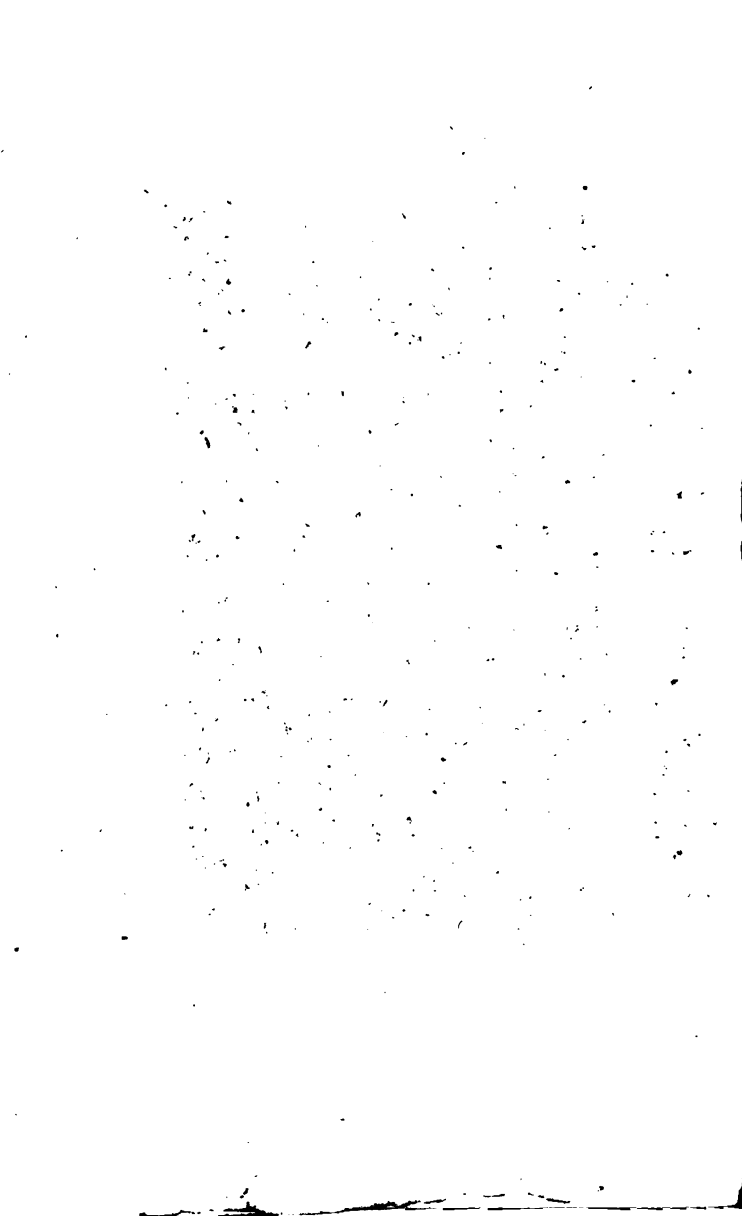


As the bright fire glides slowly on, the hills  
Flash, and go out :—now here a temple starts,  
With mighty dome, and glittering cupola,  
A thousand fathoms high :—again 'tis gone ;—  
And you behold a fortress on a rock,  
And thronging warriors on its battlements,  
Waving their swords, and hurrying to and fro,  
And blazing standards fluttering in the wind.—  
That passes ; and, upon the other side—  
Lo ! a fierce conflagration, like a tower  
Quivering and red with ardent heat.—'Tis gone ;—  
And, far beyond, you see a diamond hill  
On which a ruby palace stands ;—its gates  
Are silver, and its crystal windows gleam  
To the setting sun.—But that too vanishes ;—  
And, farther yet, behold a cataract  
Pouring a flood of silver from the clouds  
Down to the earth. Now grottos, palaces,  
Vast arches, fiery pillars, shooting up  
At once from earth to heaven ; all possible shapes,



Engraved by G. Cooke from a drawing by J. Martin.

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And of all hues, start up from side to side,  
Till the bright meteor dies ; or mounts perchance  
To sail the heavens like a wandering moon ;  
Or steals away among the distant hills,  
That flash,—and fade,—fainter—and fainter,—till  
The quivering gleams are lost in infinite distance.

“ Here lightnings too—not such as wake the thunders,—

But noiseless, beautiful, and harmless fires,  
Play in the sky, and run among the mountains,  
Casting excessive splendour. And there are  
Magnificent gleams along the ethereal heavens,  
So bright, that even to your lower clime  
A faint reflection sometimes hath been sent :  
These turn the night into a glorious day :  
The sky is fill'd with them ; they shoot—and quiver,—  
And wave—and shake,—as if some army of Heaven  
Were passing with its gorgeous, sun-light banners,  
And fiery arms along the fields of space.

“ All these fine sights, and those appalling storms,  
Are workings of the viewless shapes of air.  
Earth every where is beauteous, or sublime,  
Though man perceive it not : tis not alone  
Within the fertile fields which *he* hath till'd,  
That higher natures dwell ;—the barren heath,  
The inaccessible mountain, the vast desert,—  
All have their favouring visitants, and all  
Would to thy purified sight be beautiful :—  
But thy short term of life would pass away  
Ere I could show thee half their loveliness :—  
And there are beauteous and noble things  
That mortal sight hath never yet beheld ;  
These rather will I show thee.”

Saying thus,

The glorious spirit caught me by the hand,  
And up into the air we flew. Our course  
Was now less swift than at our first ascent,  
Yet inconceivably rapid. O'er the deeps

We took our way toward the sun, that rose  
Higher and higher in the sky. Still, still  
The huge abyss was underneath us. Islands  
Seem'd in our rapid flight to sail the deep,  
Like shadows of swift travelling clouds. The sun  
With every instant mounted till he stood  
In middle heaven ; then gradually fell,  
While over a vast continent we pass'd,  
As he were setting in the East. Again  
The ocean was below us ; and the sun,  
As over that immensity we flew,  
Sank down,—and down,—and dipp'd his burning disk  
Into the waves, as it were evening there :  
But when we check'd our course he also paused,  
And turn'd his chariot back into the sky ;—  
And it was morning now.

A thousand leagues  
Beneath us I beheld,—one boundless plain  
Of flashing, burning, ever-rolling waters.

“Thou hast beheld,” the placid spirit said,  
“The climes of everlasting frost ;—and now  
We hover o’er the regions where the sun  
Makes a perpetual summer :—these vast waters  
Know little of the tempest, but still lie  
In a calm majesty ; and numerous hosts  
Of airy shapes have here their loved abode :  
Through them our passage lies to the heart of earth ;—  
Let us descend.”

So saying, we dropp’d down,  
And sank into the waves. There was no dash  
Of parted waters, as our subtile forms  
Plung’d underneath, for we cut smoothly through,  
As through the air ;—but the bright sunshine soon  
Became a glowing emerald hue, that changed  
To deep—and deeper ;—and when I look’d up,  
I saw no sun, but a green canopy  
Above us, exquisitely pure, yet dark,  
Like a new firmament. Still down we sank  
Unfathomably deep ; and reach’d at length

The rocky bottom. Not a ray of light  
Pierc'd to this awful depth : there was no sound  
Heard there, nor motion felt.

“ This is to thee,”

My gentle and beneficent guide began,  
“ All blank :—thy mortal fabric is sublimed  
To spiritual fineness ; and thy senses are  
Strengthen'd and clear'd ; yet thou hast not the  
powers

That airy beings have ; thou canst not hear  
The voices and the sounds that I now hear ;  
Thou canst not see the thousand shapes that dwell  
Within these awful depths ; for I have left  
Thy human faculties, lest terrible forms  
Or sounds o'erwhelm thee :—but I will light up  
These dark abysses like the sunny fields ;  
And thou shalt see how Nature, even here,  
Is beautiful.”

Now suddenly the darkness  
Fled ; and a glorious light shone round about,



As if the waters, over-charged with heat,  
Had burst into a blaze. Then I beheld  
The bed of the great deep :—mountains of rock,  
Huge as earth's highest hills ; and rocky valleys,  
All bright, and glittering, and pure : no weed,  
Or earth, or slime, as in the shallow seas,  
Defil'd them ;—the transparent waters rested  
Upon them like an emerald atmosphere.

Then thus again the beautiful spirit spake.  
“ Here are not verdant fields and waving trees,  
Flowers of sweet perfume, fanning airs, or clouds  
Of gorgeous colours ;—nought that makes the face  
Of earth so lovely :—but, is there no charm .  
In these majestic, unadorned hills,  
Those brilliant plains and valleys, this pure light,  
This awful solitude ? Thou hast beheld  
The shapes of air and earth ; there also are  
That in these watery deeps oft make abode.  
Some love to sport in the calm seas, and toss

The sparkling waves, and creamy foam about :—  
Some go down to these lowest depths, where storm  
Can never reach ; but everlasting silence,  
And a green twilight reigns, or total dark.  
Here are the down-prest waters heavier  
And harder than the adamant :—no plummet  
Can ever fathom here :—the weightiest anchor  
Would float as lightly as the thistle-down  
Upon the whirlwind :—were the hugest rock  
Cast forth into these waters, it would find,  
Ere it could sound their depths, a buoyancy,  
Strong as their surface gives the fleetest bark :—  
Here the enormous monsters of the deep  
Can never come ; their region is above,  
In the lighter waves :—the vertical sun looks here,—  
If all above be calm,—faint as the moon,  
When through thick mists her orb may just be  
traced,  
But of a deep, soft green :—his hottest ray

Gives here no warmth, more than the glow-worm's  
beam :—

Yet in this everlasting silence and repose,  
And thickest dark, alternating with light  
That seems but darkness of another hue,  
There's a sublimity and awfulness  
That suits some natures well.

“ Others there are  
That love to work the tempest,—turn the deeps  
Round like a chariot-wheel ; and in the gulf  
Suck navies down, whirling the huge ships round  
And round, like atoms of the dust, that winds  
Catch from the parch'd road in their sportive curls.  
But these are not the shapes that thou hast seen :  
Mighty they are, but terrible. The wretch  
Who rides the roaring deep in the thick night,  
Dreading each mountain wave may bury him ;  
Who, in the shoutings of the elements,  
Finds his own loudest shout become a sound

Faint as the breathing of a sleeping child ;—  
He doth not know how these appalling forms  
Are round him, and beneath him, and above,—  
Rolling the waters up from their deep bed,—  
Riding upon the black and labouring clouds,  
And howling in the winds.—

“ Look upward now  
Tow’rds yon huge mountain !—on its top thou seest  
Enormous masses of black rock, that seem  
Like some gigantic city overthrown :  
And such it was ; the work of those who lived  
Ere man was ; for the ocean hath not always  
Cover’d these hills. That mighty wreck was once  
The abode of life and joy :—the sun shone there ;  
And the winds play’d amid the trees and flowers.  
How silent, dark, and lonely is it now !  
So deep beneath the topmost waves, no storm  
Can move those waters that enshrine it, keeping  
The elements of decay at rest. Yet there

The wise have counsell'd, and the fair have smiled :—  
There generations first drew breath, and lived,—  
And saw their children, and their children's sons  
Grow up in peace ! What myriads from that height  
Have look'd out on the sea beneath, to hail  
The rising sun ; or to espy the ship  
Coming from distant lands, that brought their sons,  
Fathers, or husbands ! That black, mournful wreck  
Was once magnificent temples, palaces,  
And dwellings of the wealthy !—and they deem'd  
Their city was eternal. In a moment  
It ceas'd to be :—the waters cover'd it.—  
Listen ! and thou shalt hear how this befell.

“ Oh ! it is beautiful to see this world  
Pois'd in the crystal air,—with all its seas,  
Mountains, and plains majestically rolling  
Around its noiseless axis, day by day,  
And year by year, and century after century ;  
And, as it turns, still wheeling through the immense

Of ether, circling the resplendent sun  
In calm and simple grandeur !

“ Yet a time

Hath been, in the profound of ages past,  
When this fair order was disturb'd. The earth  
Was then not what ye see it now ; nor man,  
Such as now is, existed then ; nor beasts ;  
Nor did the globe bend toward the sun its poles  
As now ; but yet it held sublimely on  
The same unerring path along the heavens.

“ Then suddenly there came a fiery star,  
Wandering from out its orbit, masterless.  
The dwellers of the earth,—they were a race  
Mightier than yours,—look'd nightly on the sky,  
And their thoughts were troubled : night by night  
the star  
Grew brighter, larger ;—waving flames shot out  
That made the sky appear to shake and quiver.  
Night after night it grew ;—the stars were quench'd

Before its burning presence ;—the moon took  
A paler—and a paler hue :—men climbed  
Upon the mountains every eve to watch  
How it arose ; and sat upon the ground  
All night to gaze upon it. The day then  
Became the time for sleeping ; and they woke  
From feverish rest at evening to look out  
For the terrific visitor. Night by night  
It swell'd and brighten'd :—all the firmament  
Was kindled when it came. The waning moon  
Had died away ; and when she should have come  
Again into the sky men found her not.  
Still, still the heaven-fire grew !—there was no night ;  
But to the day succeeded a new day  
Of strange and terrible splendour. Darkness then  
Became a luxury ; and men would go  
To caves and subterranean depths to cool  
Their hot and dazzled eyes. The beasts of the field  
Were restless and uneasy, knowing not  
Their hour for slumber ; they went up and down

Distractedly ; and, as they fed, would stop,  
And tremble, and look round, as if they fear'd  
A lurking enemy. The things of prey,—  
Monsters that earth now knows not,—came abroad  
When the red night-sun had gone down ; for day  
With its mild light less glar'd upon their eyes  
Than that fire-flashing firmament. Yet,—yet  
With every coming night the terrible star  
Expanded : men had now no thought but that :  
All occupations were laid by :—the earth  
Was left untill'd :—the voyagers on the deeps  
Forsook their ships, and got upon the land  
To wait the unknown event. O'er all the world  
Unutterable terror reign'd. Men now  
By thousands, and by tens of thousands, met—  
Wond'ring and prophesying. Day and night  
All habitable regions sent to heaven  
Wailings, and lamentations, and loud prayers.  
The ethereal shapes that peopled earth, as now,



Saw with astonishment, but not with fear,  
This strange disorder ;—for the wreck of worlds  
Injures not them. The spirits of the sun  
Look'd wondering down, expecting what might come ;  
For right tow'rds earth the blazing Terror held  
Its awful course ; and all the abyss of space  
Resounded to the roarings of its fires.

“ Night after night men still look'd out :—it grew  
Night after night, faster and faster still.  
The crimson sky announc'd its terrible coming  
Long ere it rose ; and after it went down  
Look'd red and fiery long. Each night it came  
Later,—and linger'd later in the morn,  
Till in the heavens the sun and it at once—  
Eastward and westward—shone, with different lights :  
The sun, as still he shines, ineffably pure ;  
The other of intensest burning red.  
But one was still the same ;—the other swell'd

Each day to a terrific bulk, and grew  
Dreadfully bright, till the out-blazed sun  
Look'd pale,—and paler,—and at last went out ;——  
And men knew not when he arose or set,

“ The terrible event was then at hand :  
Throughout the day the roarings of its fires  
Oppress'd all ears ;—and when the fury sank  
Beneath the horizon, still throughout the night  
They heard its threatenings ; dying far away  
Till midnight ; then with every hour returning  
Louder and louder, like advancing thunders  
Riding upon the tempest.

“ Yet once more  
It rose on earthly eyes. One-fourth the heavens  
Was cover'd by its bulk. Ere it had reach'd  
Its middle course, the huge ball almost fill'd  
The sky's circumference ;—and anon there was  
No sky!—nought but that terrible world of fire  
Glaring,—and roaring,—and advancing still !

“ Men saw not this :—th’ insufferable heat  
Had slain all things that lived. The grass and herbs  
First died :—the interminable forests next  
Burst into flames :—down to their uttermost deeps  
The oceans boil’d,—spurting their bubbling waves,—  
Rocking and wallowing higher than the hills :—  
The hills themselves at last grew burning red ;  
And the whole earth seem’d as ’twould melt away.

“ Intensest expectation now held all  
The ethereal natures silent. From the heights  
Of space they look’d, and waited for the shock ;  
For in right opposite courses the two orbs  
Rush’d tow’rds each other, as two enemies haste  
To meet in deadly combat. ’Twas a sight  
Sublime, yet sad, to see this beautiful earth,—  
Stript of all verdure, empty of all life,—  
Glowing beneath the comet’s terrible breath,  
Like a huge coal of fire !

“ They now drew nigh :  
Rapidly rolling on they came !——They struck !——

The universe felt the shock. We look'd to have seen  
The earth shatter'd to dust, or borne away  
By that tremendous fire-star ; but they touch'd  
Obliquely,—and glanced off. The comet soon  
Shot swiftly on again :—the weaker earth,—  
Jarr'd from her orbit,—stood awhile,—turning  
Backward upon her axis,—vibrating  
Down to her very centre ;—then went on  
Faltering,—swinging heavily to and fro  
Upon her alter'd poles.

“ Such was the shock,  
Hills started from their roots, and flew away  
Leagues through the air :—islands and deep-fix'd rocks  
Leap'd from the sea, and on the continents  
Became new mountains :—continents were rent  
Asunder ; and the boiling seas rush'd in,

And made of them new islands :—all the waters  
That round the earth rose upward, and rush'd on  
Toward the new equator. Then the hills  
Were overflow'd ;—the highest mountain tops,  
Still peeping o'er the flood, became sea rocks  
And islands ;—and the bed of the old deeps  
Was left dry land."

**DREAM CONTINUED.**



## DREAM CONTINUED.

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THAT said, he ceased. We sank,—  
Cleaving the earth in utter darkness. Rocks  
Were passive to us as the waves. We shot  
Rapidly down, immeasurably deep ;  
Then burst at length into a blazing vault,  
Bright as the sun, when in his highest course  
Men turn them from his splendour.

I shrank back  
Amazed and terrified ! for, deep within,  
Self-balanced like the moon in the clear heaven,  
I saw what seem'd a world of fire, that burn'd



With inexpressible ardour; yet I felt  
No heat, and heard no sound. The roof, the floor,  
Were shaped alike,—one arching over head,  
One underneath,—a bright concavity,  
Like to a double sky, immensely huge.

“ This,” said the gentle Spirit, “ is the heart  
Of earth; and there thou seest the central fires  
That burn eternally. On this vast arch  
The mountains, and the valleys, and the seas  
Have their foundations. All that flashing roof,  
That glittering concave floor, is adamant.  
Nought can pass through, save the ethereal forms  
That, as I told thee, 'tween these sun-light fires  
And the great sun himself go to and fro.  
Myriads of these I now behold; but thou  
Mayst not look on them:—some there are like those  
Whom thou hast seen,—delightful shapes; but some  
Are terrible and mighty powers: thine eye  
Might not endure their aspect. Thou dost dread

Those brilliant flames ; but they will harm thee not.  
Come,—let us enter them.”

With that he took  
My half-reluctant hand, and in an instant  
We stood within the centre of that brightness.

But—as in dreams the riotous fancy oft  
Delighteth to distort the fairest forms,  
Or from things disproportion'd and uncouth  
To put together shapes of finest beauty,—  
So, suddenly, methought my guide was gone :—  
An indescribable terror came upon me :  
The fires were round me still ; yet not, as first,  
Silent and calm, but furiously tost about  
Like a stormy ocean, and roar'd hideously.  
And then methought I saw the enormous axle  
On which the earth turn'd like some monstrous engine.  
It seem'd to my starting eyes thick as the base  
Of hugest mountain, red with intense heat,  
And rolling rapidly and furiously round.

And everywhere gigantic beings stood  
Like statues of hot iron glaring on me.  
And now it seem'd a thickest darkness fell  
About me. I beheld the fires no more ;  
But heard them bellowing dreadfully ; and heard  
The earth upon its monstrous centre whirling  
Outrageously, with noise of iron clankings  
And ponderous wheels, groaning, and grinding harsh.  
I could not bear that terror : every sense  
Grew dim and fail'd.

But the melodious voice  
Of that bright, affable Spirit came again  
Into my ear, recalling me to life .  
Gently, as in a summer's night the moon  
Comes with her mild face from beneath the hills,  
Waking the dark earth from her dewy sleep,  
And calling up the slumbering nightingales.

I found myself again within the deeps,  
In stillness and in darkness. "We are now,"

The Spirit said, "beneath another sea :  
These waters wash the Indian shores : the sun,  
Whom in the great Pacific we just left  
Beginning a new day, is setting here.  
Look ! as we pause, thou mayst discern a dark,  
Dim purple tinge above ;—'tis his last ray  
Firing the topmost waves. Thou canst not know,  
In this deep silence, and these motionless waters,  
What even now is doing overhead :  
These awful depths are sleeping peacefully,  
As they for ever sleep ; but, higher up,  
A storm is raging. Come, let us ascend."

With that we mounted ; and anon I saw  
The waters swaying round us, and soon heard  
The faint moan of the raging waves on high.  
Still, as we slowly rose, the uproar grew  
Louder and louder : the vex'd waters rush'd  
Vehemently from side to side ; and, lo !  
I saw in the dim light a goodly ship,

Prow foremost, shooting like an arrow down  
Into the gulf:—fast to the ropes and masts  
The stiffen'd dead men clung as when they sank.

It pass'd us in an instant ; and we rose  
Higher and higher, and the noise increased,  
And the billows gather'd fury, and were mixed  
With foam. Enormous fishes roll'd about,  
Lashing the waves in terror. Soon we sprang  
Into the air ; and then the hurricane  
Added its howlings to the ocean's roar :  
The rain beat fiercely down ; and massive clouds  
Roll'd heavily over : thunders too began  
To call from the dark sky ; and lightnings broke  
From out their holds, and ran along the waters,  
Kindling the foam. But we went slowly up,—  
Passing the thick clouds, and the shouting thunders ;—  
And saw the clear sky over head, and stars  
Twinkling serenely, and the rising moon  
Throwing her silver rays on the dense vapours

That rock'd and roll'd beneath us. Up we went  
In the still air above the fighting winds ;  
The noise of waves, and storms, and thunders died  
Softly away, and we reposed at length  
In the calm moonlight, and intensest silence.

I gazed upon the lovely lamp of night,  
And scenes and times gone by came to my view,  
Bringing a gentle sadness: lonely walks  
In summer evenings, or at dead of night  
Through solemn shadowy woods, or by the banks  
Of broad, clear, whispering river, when the light  
Of that same quiet orb was shining there,  
As now upon the warring clouds beneath.  
I had just heard the noise of waves and winds,  
And seen the rocking waters, and the clouds  
Mingling in fury: now they seem'd to lie  
In a soft slumber, save that here and there  
Some cloud top turning red, and quivering  
Hastily through and through, announced the strife

Still raging ; but no thunder could reach there :  
Each flash came fainter, and the reddening clouds  
Grew less and less : the moon, too, climbed the sky  
With an unusual swiftness :—yet, intent  
On what I had beheld, and thinking much  
Of that fine ship, with her ill-fated crew,  
Floating beneath the dark deeps ; and the eyes  
That must look vainly out for their return  
From day to day,—and week to week,—and month  
To lingering month ;—and of the agonies  
Of hearts that, hoping long, must cease to hope,  
And sink into despair ;—with such thoughts fill'd,  
I mark'd not that we still went slowly up,  
Till suddenly the sunshine burst upon me,  
And brought my senses back.

“ Thou hast been lost

In thought,” the radiant Spirit said, “ nor I  
Would stir thee, that thy feeble faculties,  
Wearied with contemplating things so far  
Beyond thy little knowledge, might repose,

Ere on a longer journey we set forth  
To view still nobler sights. Thou marvell'st much  
To be again in day-light, when, but now,  
Night was beginning ; but the mountain's top  
Catches the sunshine while the vale is dark ;  
And at this altitude we see him still,  
Though mountains, were they here on mountains  
piled,  
Would be in shade. We now have soar'd above  
The atmosphere of earth, and fly in ether.  
Turn thine eye downward."

While he spake, I looked,  
And saw a wondrous sight: unbounded ocean,—  
Islands,—enormous continents. Three parts  
Lay in dim moonlight, and the fourth in day;  
And every instant the horizon spread,  
And took in other lands and wider seas.  
Up,—up we went,—and yet the prospect grew:  
The sun and moon were in the sky at once;—  
The stars, too, all were out; not quivering



As men behold them from the ground, but clear  
And steady. Still we mounted ;—still the view  
Expanded ;—till, at length, from pole to pole,  
From west to east, the rim of the round earth  
Was bounded by the ether.

“ Now thou seest,”

The Spirit said, “ one half the globe,—divided  
By day and moonlight night : there Africa,—  
Here Asia,—Europe there,—and, opposite  
To the south pole, the ocean without shore.

“ How soft and tranquil all from hence appears !  
Like a most exquisite garden, where nought evil  
May ever come ! Those mazy winding shores,—  
Those calm bright seas,—those sleeping vales,—those  
hills  
Dappled with light and shade,—those rivers,—  
forests,—  
Islands,—and lakes,—not visible hence to thee,  
But to me clear ;—how beautiful are they all !

Doth it not seem a spot where happy things  
Should dwell, for ever happy? Who would think  
To find in such a paradise broken hearts,—  
Emaciated forms,—limbs bent and rigid  
With years of ceaseless toil,—faces where health,  
If ever known, hath left no bloom behind;  
But where the miserable heart looks out,  
Telling in every feature—wretchedness?  
Is this the doom of nature? No! 'tis man,—  
Weak and mistaken man,—that hath himself  
Inflicted on his fellows misery  
To purchase that which yet he hath not gained,—  
A happiness more than simple nature gives.  
Pride and self-love have been and are the source  
Of general misery: each man for himself  
Strives only,—not for needful sustenance  
Or harmless joys, which, with a wiser course,  
All might, and should have; but to rise above  
His fellow men in wealth, and rank, and power,  
Unheeding how, to elevate himself,

Others must be depress'd. As in the sea  
Disturb'd by tempests, every wave that climbs  
To touch the clouds must leave the waters nigh  
The lower sunk as it the higher mounts ;  
So the rapacious, and the ambitious man,  
Heaping together wealth, or grasping power,  
Must leave his fellows poorer, and less free.  
*One* is not great or rich but as the rest  
Are poor and weak :—one bloated epicure  
Makes many hungry :—one who rolls in wealth  
Leaves hundreds pinched with want :—one despot  
lives  
That millions may be slaves. Did they *create*  
The luxuries they *seize*, it were not so ;  
And *they* alone were pitiable things,  
Mistaking their own good, deeming the *means*  
To be the *end*. Life's real joys are few ;  
But ample for the reach of happiness :  
Health and a quiet mind include them all.  
But can the wretch who, by unceasing toil

From early morn till night, year after year,  
Must earn his meagre food, feel peace of mind ?  
Can his worn frame have the fresh glow of health ?  
Can he look pleased on nature's endless charms,  
Which he must never taste ? The fields and woods,  
The seas and hills are beautiful ; but he  
Must sweat in the hot factory or mine,  
Shut from the wholesome airs of heaven, the sights,  
The pleasant sounds of nature. When he rests,  
'Tis not to enjoy the happiness of being,  
The consciousness of life on this fine earth ;  
But to prepare his jaded limbs to meet  
Another day of toil and misery.  
And for what end ?—that some proud pamper'd man  
May drink himself to drunkenness,—may gorge  
His greedy stomach till the bloated mass  
Becomes corruption,—deck his useless limbs  
With gaudy ornaments, and call himself  
Wealthy and great. But is *he* happy then ?  
Hath the unremitting toil and wretchedness

Of hundreds given in one heap to him  
The happiness that hundreds should have shared ?  
No ! he is proud and wrathful,—covetous  
Of more, though he already hath too much :  
A thousand foolish wants are satisfied,  
But thousands more arise. Look at his nights,  
Sleepless and feverish ; or distraught with dreams  
That well repay on him the misery  
That hundreds feel through him :—he knoweth not  
The luxury of a vigorous limb,—the glow  
Of health,—the lightness of the heart,—the dance  
Of innocent spirits :—he is but a cancer  
Upon the general body,—in itself  
Painful and foul,—and draining the whole mass  
Of health and strength.

“ Doth the proud monarch sleep  
More soundly on the gorgeous couch for which  
Thousands have made their bed upon the ground ?  
If he have wisdom, 'twould as brightly shine  
Without the glittering jewels on his head,

To furnish which what numbers have lack'd food  
And shelter from the elements ! But not  
To kings or nobles doth the blame belong  
Exclusively : even those who think themselves  
Robb'd by their lords, do rob as greedily  
The ranks below themselves, till they whose toil  
Gives all the rest their luxuries, are depress'd  
To want and misery. Self-love, thou seest,—  
Self-pride,—the cause of all. Would man but learn  
That—to be truly happy, he should strive  
To make his fellows so,—all might be well."

The son of ether ceased, and we flew on.  
The moon behind us sank ; the sun before  
Rose upward, and pass'd on above us, lighting  
All that we saw of earth ; then fell again  
Eastward, till only on three parts he shone ;  
And on the other part the moon again,  
Seeming to have backward run her course round earth,  
Cast her mild gleam.

Then the huge continent,  
America, from north to south, outstretch'd  
Almost from pole to pole, we saw, encompassed  
By mighty oceans. 'Twas a glorious sight !  
Seas, shores, with every curve and angle, plain  
As on a map ; but the whole globe appear'd  
Not larger than some wide-spread valley, seen  
From top of central mountain. Here and there  
An island in the great deep I beheld,  
As 'twere a dark-sail'd vessel seen far off ;  
And oft I thought I could distinguish hill  
And vale ; and some broad rivers I could spy,  
That went to the Atlantic.

“ Beautiful  
And gentle Spirit !” I exclaim'd, “ oh ! say  
How I shall thank thee ? thou indeed hast shown  
The loveliness and the sublimity  
Of nature.”

“ Thou *hast* thanked me,” he replied :  
“ Man, for his petty benefits conferred,

Demands loud praises,—still renewed thanks :  
*We* ask not such,—contented if we see  
The good we tender felt to be a good.  
The thankless oft are noisiest in their thanks ;  
As on the unfruitful pavement every drop  
That falls from the kind sky is told aloud :  
But in the grateful heart a blessing sinks,  
Like the same shower upon a sunny field,  
That drinks it silently, and shows its thanks  
By smiles and glad increase.

“ But now again  
Look downward to the earth, for I have clear'd  
Thine eyes, that thou like us mayst see.”

Then I look'd down, and on the sea descried  
A fleet of atom ships, that softly stole  
Along the small white waves ; all sails were up,  
Leaning and bellying to the wind ; and men  
Were on the decks, and in the shrouds. Some walk'd  
With proud and stately step, and some lay down



Stretch'd at their length asleep. I cannot tell  
By any words their wondrous littleness ;  
Yet I could see each feature, every smile,  
And every changing look. And there was one  
Who through a telescope look'd out, then seem'd  
To give some order :—certain signals straight  
Were made, and answering signals given anon  
From other ships ; and then the tiny sails  
Were alter'd, and the masts swung round, and lean'd  
On the other side.

Now to the land I look'd,  
And saw thick-peopled cities, that appear'd  
Small as a daisy's rim ; and fortresses  
And temples smaller than the delicate spots  
Within the cowslip's bell ; and hosts of men  
With serious, busy faces ; steeds and chariots,  
And crowded market places.

I turn'd then  
To look upon the mountains, and the lakes,  
And the primeval forests, where man's foot

Hath never trod. Then, from its petty spring  
Amid the hills, I track'd some little stream,  
That further on became a river ; took  
Hundreds of other streams as it flow'd on ;  
And grew a mighty current that bore ships ;  
Then fleets, as 'twere an inland sea ; and last  
Roll'd its tempestuous waters to the ocean ;—  
Driving far out,—wave foaming against wave.

Now on some bright green island I look'd down,  
Bedded within the pure and boundless deep ;  
There I saw graceful trees, and fertile fields,  
That, rounded by the foamy breakers, seem'd  
Like a rich emerald set in orient pearl.

Thus with insatiate eye, from sea to land,  
From land to sea, I turn'd ; with new delight  
Glancing from moonlight west to sunny east,—  
From pole to pole ; till suddenly methought  
We soar'd again, and the huge ball began

To lessen rapidly ;—each outline grew  
Smaller and dimmer,—every moment less—  
And less :—where ocean ended, or the shore  
Arose, I knew not oft : still, still it shrank :  
All soon was but one mass of pleasant light,  
With delicate shadowings scatter'd here and there,  
Like the full moon seen through astronomer's glass :  
Yet, yet it lessen'd,—till it seem'd anon  
A smaller moon,—and last but a bright star  
Amid a host of stars.

“ Benignant Spirit !”

I cried in rapture, “ whither dost thou take me ?”

“ I told thee,” he replied, “ thou shouldst behold  
New regions. Thou hast look'd upon the sun,  
When he arose or set upon the earth,  
With awe and admiration ; how wilt thou  
Endure to stand within his burning sphere ?  
For thither are we bound ; nay,—look not up  
Till I have given thee strength to bear that sight ;

But list awhile. Thou seest these shining orbs  
That wing their smooth way through the fields of  
ether ;

And thou didst hear on earth the seas and hills  
Giving out joyful music :—think'st thou then  
These mighty worlds are voiceless ?

“ To thine ear,

Unopen'd, what a deep and awful silence  
Is in these lonely realms of endless space !  
The murmur of a stream, the gentle cooing  
Of a young dove, breaking upon this hush,  
Would seem to thee loud as a cataract ;  
But thou shalt know that silence is not here,  
Nor dead vacuity : throughout all space  
Nature hath her own music :—all that gives  
To the eye beauty, yields, to gifted ears,  
A melody as beauteous. Listen, now !”

Oh ! then there was a burst of glorious sounds,  
Such as I never heard, and could not hear

With waking sense, and live :—nor can I tell,  
Nor could man comprehend, by any force  
Of words, the beauty, the sublimity  
Of that o'erwhelming chorus ; for, at once  
From every star there issued forth a voice  
That might have sounded to the uttermost ends  
Of space,—majestic,—awful ; yet inspiring  
Joy,—tenderness,—devotion,—rapture,—all  
That melts the spirit down in bliss, or lifts,  
Expands, and glorifies, as if it felt  
The presence of the actual Deity.  
At once the mighty spheres sent up their song  
In various and magnificent harmony :  
Each twinkling star among the countless host  
Chanted exultingly, with tone distinct,  
As if alone it sang ; yet all commix'd  
In wondrous chorus :—and the sun above  
Pour'd out his voice as if the infinitude  
Of space were fill'd with deep, melodious thunders.

I heard ; and could not move, and could not think.  
But suddenly all was silent ;—a dead hush,  
Deeper than midnight stillness in the heart  
Of a vast arid desert, where no tree,  
Nor herb, nor grass is, nor a living thing  
For ages enters. Then the tuneful voice  
Of that benignant Spirit came again,  
Sweet as the dashing of a mountain brook  
To the parch'd, gasping traveller, who, from morn  
Till sultry eve, hath toil'd in the hot sun  
O'er burning sands, and found no shading tree,  
No cooling cave, no water.

“ Thou hast heard  
The music of the skies, and all thy soul  
It did absorb, that thou hadst found no sense  
For things of sight, had I still left thine ears  
Awake to its divinity : but come,—  
We must away : thine eyes I strengthen now  
To bear the dazzling visions that await thee.  
Look up !”

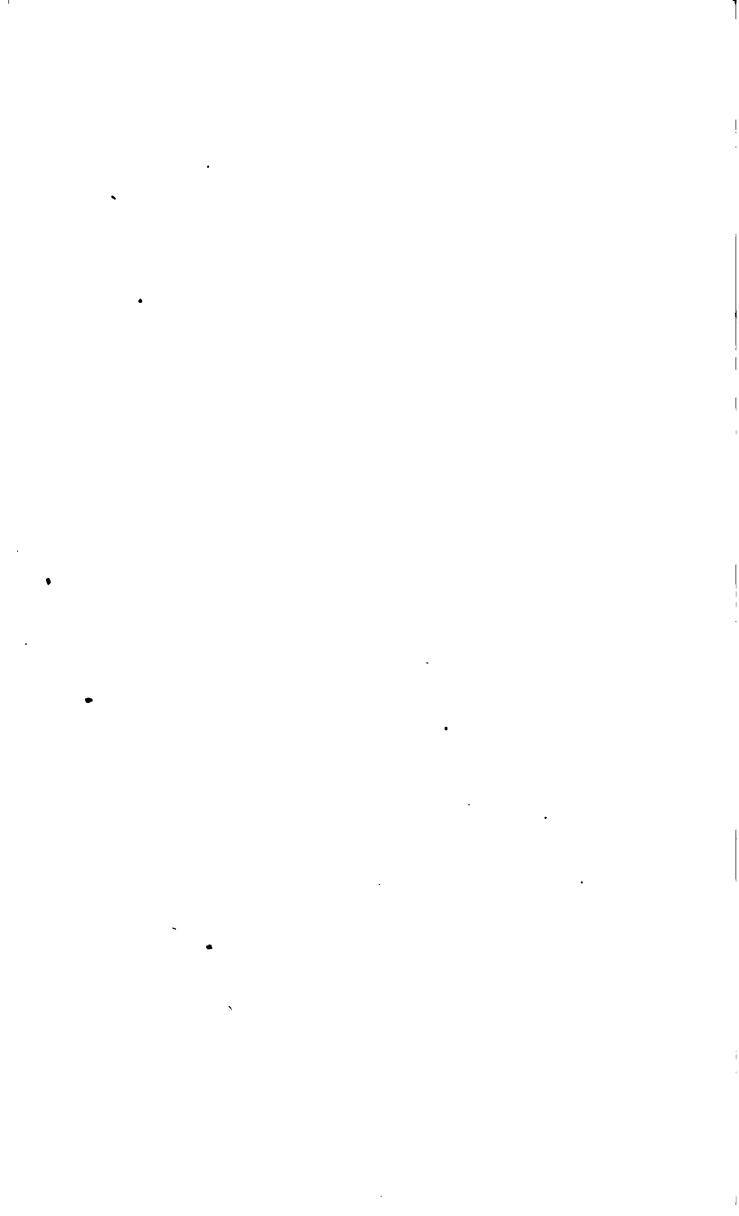
With that I raised my eyes, and saw  
The sun in bulk like an inverted sky ;  
Not of fierce fire, as from the earth he seems,  
But flashing, glowing like a diamond,  
Unutterably bright and pure : all tints  
Glitter'd and trembled there ; came,—went,—and  
came

Incessantly. Compared with this, the flare  
Of noontide sun on earth had been a blank ;  
Yet I look'd up undazzled : more and more  
It swell'd and brighten'd, till it seem'd to fill  
The furthest ends of space. Nigh and more nigh  
We flew : we enter'd soon what seem'd a sea  
Of dense light :—through it rapidly we shot,  
And saw beneath us, at amazing depth,  
A bright, interminable landscape,—mountains,  
To which earth's loftiest are but specks, that seem'd  
Of diamond, ruby, sapphire, emerald ;—  
Forests that would have cover'd all our globe ;—  
Rivers more broad than are the seas of earth ;—

And ocean, that appear'd like liquid sapphire,  
So vast, methought through ages upon ages  
The swiftest bark might sail, and find no end.

Downward we shot like lightning: I just caught  
A glance at all these splendours ; then sank down  
Giddy and senseless, and oblivion came  
On my o'erpower'd faculties awhile.





**DREAM CONTINUED.**



## DREAM CONTINUED.

---

WHEN sense return'd, methought I found myself  
Reclined beside a fountain, whose sweet current  
Whisper'd a crystal music to my ear  
While yet my other senses slept. It seem'd  
Like waking first to life, when, one by one,  
The new-created feels his faculties  
Coming upon him. First the liquid sounds  
Of those delicious waters play'd about  
My ears, that passively took in the bliss:  
Then to my nostrils all rich fragrances

Arose ; yet I awoke not :—last, my eyes,  
Slowly unclosing, met a beautiful,  
Soft, violet-tinted light, whose grateful coolness  
They for awhile drank in unconsciously ;—  
And then at length I stirred, and seem'd awake.

Beside me, pillow'd on a flowery bank,  
As if asleep, my bright conductor lay ;  
But, as I moved, he spake. “ Well, child of earth,”  
Methought he said, “ thou hast enjoy'd long slumber,  
And needful to thee, after such far flight,  
And such unwonted visions, and fine sounds.  
I too have slept, and others thou mayst see  
Still sleeping near thee ; for the ethereal race  
Ofttimes like men do slumber ; not, as they,  
To rest their wearied bodies, which would else  
Refuse their task, but for sweet interchange  
Of pleasure ; else, untired, they might remain  
Thousands of years, as men compute, unsleeping.

While thus he spake, I look'd around, and saw,  
Bedded in flowers of indescribable beauty,  
Beside the fountain, and beneath the trees,  
Along the vale, and on the gentle hills,  
Many ethereal shapes that lay asleep,  
Like roses slumbering in the dewy night.  
Upon the crystal waters also some  
Had made their couch ; or, rather, seem'd to float  
Upon the rosy mist, that from the surface  
Went up like a rich incense.

Save the voice  
Of that most musical fountain, a deep hush  
That seem'd itself a music, so its full,  
Luxurious sereneness held my soul  
In a sweet rapture, everywhere was round us.  
I would have risen from my perfumed bed  
To look more freely on those lovely scenes,  
But the benignant Spirit thus began.

“ Repose thee yet awhile ; and, while thine eye  
Feeds on this delicate light,—thine ear is fill’d  
With that sweet fountain’s melody,—and all  
These mingling fragrances delight thy smell,—  
I will discourse with thee ; for yet the hour  
Of stillness and repose hath much to run.

“ Here, as on earth, there is perpetual change  
Of hours and seasons ; and, as ye have night  
And day, so have we sweet variety  
Of light, from the bright, glorious atmosphere  
That at thy coming thou didst view, to this  
Soft, violet ether. It is now our night ;  
Yet clearer mayst thou see than at mid noon  
Upon the earth. That crystal rock that stands  
From out the sapphire deep, which thou mayst see  
Distinct as the round moon in a clear heaven,  
Is distant from us, as ye count on earth,  
Thousands of leagues : this flowery valley, bounded

By that fine chain of amethystine hills,  
Is vaster than earth's largest continent.  
See ! up yon winding river, where the trees  
Dip their down-bending branches, every leaf  
Thou mayst discern ; and all the pearly drops  
Trembling within those flowery cups that fringe  
Its banks : yet in the brightest noon of earth  
They would be viewless, so remote look'd at,  
Even through your boasted tubes. Look overhead !  
That flood of light through which we pass'd, that  
girds

This mighty orb about, takes, hour by hour,  
As here we measure hours, a varying hue,  
Thou saw'st in entering its bright noon ; then comes  
A ruby tint, that all this ether turns  
To its own colour ; next, with soft gradation,  
All deep and golden hues that thou hast seen  
In the rich topaz, that beneath your earth  
The sun's ray hath created, with all gems



And glittering metals : imperceptibly  
Then steal upon our firmament all shades  
Of the pure emerald ; they, dying, change  
To sapphire hues ; and, last, this violet tinge,  
Which thou dost see so beautiful and pure,  
Comes with slow step upon us : then 'tis night.  
After a time these lovely hues return  
In backward order to the ruby glow,  
And then to the full splendour of the day.  
Even such soft, blending colours men behold,  
Though infinitely dull with these compared,  
In the bright bow that arches o'er their sky,  
When the mild spring-rains and the sun contend  
To hasten on the flowers.

“ Beside the shapes  
Ethereal that thou hast seen, this orb  
Hath other habitants ; a race, like men,  
Form'd from the globe they dwell on ; but more  
bright,—

More powerful,—beauteous,—of more subtile mould,  
As this magnificent sphere is more than earth  
Splendid, and great, and beautiful. Like men  
They have their cities, temples, monuments,—  
Built from the quarries of yon colour'd hills,—  
Ruby, or amethyst, or other stones  
Of lustrous hue, such as are common here,  
But deck the diadems of kings on earth.  
They have their gardens, and their baths, their  
bridges  
That span the ocean rivers thou didst see.  
They have their horses too,—creatures of size,  
And strength, and beauty inconceivable  
By man,—with eyes like sunshine,—manes of fire ;  
Their neigh is louder than a thousand trumpets ;  
The hot breath from their nostrils would appear  
To thee like the red smoke from burning cities ;  
The trampling of their hoofs would rock your earth,—  
Their might drag up your mountains,—in their speed  
They would deride your hurricanes. Yet these,

The dwellers of the sun have tamed, as ye  
The earthly steeds ; but have not bow'd them down  
By unremitting toil, nor broke their spirit  
To groan beneath the lash and torturing goad,  
As proud, mean man hath. Here are chariots, too,  
High as your highest hills, of sapphire built,  
With wheels of ruby oft, or diamond :  
These the strong horses whirl along the plains  
Lightly as yours would draw an infant's toy.

“ But see the night's deep hour is passing by :  
The ether's delicate tint of violet  
Melts to a rich deep blue. Some airy shapes  
Are up I see already. Look ! upon  
Yon sapphire hill a glorious figure stands,  
Like a vermilion cloud in the eastern sky ;—  
And there, far over that blue ocean, go  
Some spirits that delight in the clear deep ;  
But most will slumber till the golden ray  
Hath chased the emerald. Now thou mayst see

What ships are here to navigate our seas :  
There,—lying by that rock of chrysolite,—  
With crimson sails, and ropes of twisted gold.  
Its planks of fragrant, undecaying wood  
Are sheathed in silver :—all your boasted fleets  
Might float within its hull :—the masts are cedar,  
Coated with gold ; and its bright decks are pearl.  
How still it rests !—And that blue ocean, too,  
How like a polish'd gem,—so bright and smooth !  
For in our nights the winds too sleep : at morn  
They wake again with sounds like distant music,  
That, as the day advances, still come on,  
Louder and louder, till the blazing noon ;  
Then all the ether, all the hills and seas,  
Give out delightful music, that, towards eve,  
Softens and sinks again ; and, ere night comes,  
Dies quite away.

“ We know not tempests here,  
Such as on earth, that bring dismay and darkness,  
And make destruction sport ; but oft the winds

Rise from their slumber with excessive joy,  
And rush vehemently about the forests,  
And over the blue deeps ; yet all is bright  
And beautiful : the music only sounds  
More joyfully and loud,—the fragrant airs  
Are but more fragrant. Then thou shouldst behold  
Those waters that now lie so placidly :  
Up, up they go, higher than all the Alps  
And Andes each upon the other piled :  
Of sapphire blue more bright than earthly sunshine ;  
Their foam is like a crest of diamonds,  
And pearls, and every lustrous gem : their voice  
Would madden thee with rapture :—to and fro  
They sway, and flash, and burn ; millions of shapes  
Hover above them, or upon them lie  
Rocking ; and with their fine aerial harps  
And voices join the music of the waves.

“ Then shouldst thou see how through the mighty  
billows

The glittering ship rides on ; its crimson sails  
Full swell'd, and leaning gracefully ; its sides  
And silver keel shining intensely bright  
Beneath the blue waves ; from its glowing prow  
Dashing the waters by, and throwing up  
Clouds of all-colour'd spray that wrap it round  
With a hundred rainbow-girdles :—up it climbs  
To the liquid mountain's top, and the sails strain  
And quiver : there it stands a moment, glittering  
Like some most gorgeous bird pluming itself  
In the golden light of morn : then down it goes  
Swiftly and smoothly o'er the long descent  
To the deep watery vale ; and then again  
Its prow is lifted, and it shoots aloft  
Exultingly.

“ Here nothing feels decay,  
Sickness, or death. Those forests are eternal,—  
These fields are ever green,—for ever breathe  
The same delicious perfume :—every morn  
Brings to all things fresh youth :—the ripe fruit hangs

Still ripening to more exquisite lusciousness :—  
The flowers die never ; but are still in youth  
As when their buds first open'd :—the still waters  
Here stagnate not, nor gender noisome things ;  
But lie like crystal ever pure and bright.  
Here too we have our morning mists and dews ;  
Thou mayst behold them gathering even now  
Above the waters, and along the plains,  
Like a transparent veil of rosy light :—  
They hide not, but refresh and beautify :  
And see how the bright dew-drops gem the flowers :  
They shine not by reflected light like yours,  
That flash but in the sunshine ; every drop  
Hath its own radiance ; every possible tint  
Thou mayst behold among them. As the morn  
Puts on its glory, they too take new lustre  
Till the day comes : they then melt gently off,  
Breathing, as they dissolve, dim, exquisite sounds,  
And delicate odours.

“ Let us now away,—

Ere yet the pleasant hours of rest, and this  
Mild light and stillness have pass'd by: the blaze  
And pomp of noon o'ercome thee, and the sounds  
Of joyous nature, and the innumerable hosts  
Of bright creations may distract thy sense,  
Unable yet to see and hear at once  
So much of what is glorious.”

That said,

We started from our flowery couch, and shot  
Rapidly o'er the plains till we had reach'd  
The borders of a forest. I look'd up  
Delighted and astonish'd at the bulk  
And loftiness of those fine trees:—each stem  
Might have enclos'd an army of earth's sons;  
Their tops had stood above our highest clouds;  
The branches were all hung with colour'd fruits,  
Transparent, and of richest smell. We enter'd:  
The ground was cover'd with delicious flowers,  
That droop'd with the night dew, all shapes and hues;



The mighty trunks on every side shot up,  
Like pillars for a temple where the gods  
Might worship the One Deity. In bowers,  
And by the banks of many crystal streams,  
That gave out delicate music as they flow'd  
In graceful windings, beauteous shapes were sleeping :  
Some singly, some in pairs ; and on the ground,  
And on the topmost branches, many birds  
Of dazzling plumage were reposing. All  
Was fresh and silent. Swiftly we pass'd on,  
And soar'd unto the summit of a mountain,  
Whose height seem'd such, as when, in our ascent  
From earth, I look'd down, and beheld at once  
The rim of the whole globe. On either hand  
Arose, to infinite distance, other mountains  
Of every radiant gem : beneath, the vallies,  
At depth immense, lay sleeping quietly  
In the pure light : forests, and fields, and rivers ;  
And farther on, what seem'd an ocean, vast  
As our Atlantic ; but from side to side

Spann'd by a bridge of but a single arch,  
Glowing like fire. Upon the farther shore  
A city stood of inconceivable splendour :  
Towers,—pillars,—arches,—domes of every hue,—  
Mingling together gloriously.

Away,—

Away we flew o'er mountains, plains, and seas,—  
A flight immensethrough splendours beyond thought,—  
And saw at length, on the horizon's edge,  
What seem'd at first a cloud of dazzling fire ;  
But nearer as we drew, behold ! a mountain  
Of brightest diamond, in breadth outstretch'd  
Like to an earthly continent ; so high,  
A human foot, unaided, might, I thought,  
In seeking to attain its summit, toil  
From boyish days to manhood's fiery prime,—  
From manhood to decrepit age,—nor reach  
At last its top sublime. Yet on that top,  
Still shooting up immeasurably high,  
A wondrous fabric stood.

Onward we glanc'd,  
And lighted on the mountain's brow, facing  
The gates of that vast temple.

I know not,  
With aught on earth comparing it, to paint  
Its inconceivable grandeur: mortal words  
No more can tell its splendour, than the brush  
In earthly colours dipp'd, can paint the sun  
When he stands burning in the deep blue vault  
At the meridian hour, and every eye  
Shrinks from his dazzling brow.

Its substance seem'd  
Purer and brighter than all clearest gems,  
As *they* excel in purity the clod  
Dug for the modelling potter. In the midst  
A mighty dome, sky-tinctur'd, towered up,  
Till like the twinkling of a distant star  
Its burning diamond pinnacle appear'd.  
The high and spacious gates, through which methought  
The congregated nations of mankind





"Forth from the portal came three beautiful shapes"

Engraved by G. Cooke from a drawing by J. S. Norton

Published by G. Cooke, 10, New Street, London, W. 1834.

Might in loose order pass at once, were tinged  
Like morn's most delicate ether, rosy-hued :  
So lofty, that an eagle, fleetest winged,  
Might from the dawning till the noontide hour  
Of a long summer's day shoot rapidly up,  
Yet scarce attain their height.

As I look'd on

In wonder, lo ! the gates roll'd open wide,  
And, on their diamond hinges turning, gave  
A sound as of a multitude of harps  
Celestial, and sweet voices joyfully  
Filling the air ; and one deep thunder-note,  
As of a storm-swept ocean heard from far.

Forth from the portal came three beauteous shapes,  
Each bearing in his hand a glittering trumpet.  
When first beheld in that stupendous arch  
They seem'd of human stature ; but, more nigh  
Advancing towards us, they became in size  
Like fabled Titans, or that mountain man,

Design'd, but never sculptur'd, from the rock  
Athos, whose hand a city should have held.  
Yet were their forms surpassing beautiful,—  
Graceful and light in motion,—of aspect  
Not hideous to behold, like the dark brow  
And eye ferocious of earth's pigmy giant ;  
But full of bright sereneness, health, and joy,  
Temper'd with looks of high and solemn thought.  
A crimson drapery, of airy lightness,  
Flow'd loosely round their pure and polish'd limbs.

Now by the mountain's edge they pause, and lift  
Their golden trumpets, whose capacious mouths  
Were in circumference greater than that pile,  
The pride of ancient Rome, in which, with ease,  
Ten times ten thousand men at once sat down.  
Then came the loud, deep, solemn breathings forth :  
No jovial, airy flourish this, that makes  
The heart leap up,—the dancing eye flash light,  
As from earth's martial brass ; one solemn chord

Alone the mighty three awoke. It came  
Gentle and sweet at first, as a lone flute  
Heard on a summer's evening far away  
By musing wanderer in the twilight woods ;  
Then louder,—louder,—and yet louder swell'd,  
And unimaginably loud,—till all  
Above, beneath, about me, seem'd to swim  
In floods of sound ; yet was it music still :  
And when, with gentle fall, it died away,  
And all the echoes ceas'd, the oppressive hush  
Was like the approach of death. Three times they  
blew :  
Three times, from infinite space, came the long  
answers back.

That done, with graceful step they turn'd again  
Toward the temple gates. With marvelling eye  
I saw their swift receding figures shrink ;  
And when again beneath the portal arch  
Their mountain stature seem'd of human height,



I thought them scarce the same. Far, far within  
I watch'd them gliding amid endless ranks  
Of glittering columns, till to pigmy size  
They were diminish'd ; and at length I gaz'd,—  
And gaz'd,—but found them not.

“ How rapt

Art thou in admiration of this sight !”  
The gentle spirit said. “ Material man  
Sees power and grandeur still in magnitude :  
The aspect of a cloud-topt mountain bends  
His spirit with a sense of his own littleness :  
The might of the chaf'd ocean makes him feel  
How puny his own strength :—through desarts vast  
He journeys ; and along the boundless deep,—  
And sees how like an atom of the sands  
He might unnotic'd pass away :—he comes  
To life, and Nature seems like him new-born :  
He waxes grey with age, but all around  
Is young as at the first ; and well he knows  
Thousands of generations rose and fell

Ere he knew being :—many thousands still,  
When he is gone, will come, and pass,—and yet  
Nature and Time be young as at their birth :  
And thus he learns to see in magnitude  
Of form,—or boundless space,—or endless years,—  
A power and awful grandeur. And to him  
These are realities. We feel them not,  
For we are ancient as the eternal hills,—  
And as immortal. Infinite extent  
To us is nought ; for in the uttermost depths  
Or heights of space our spiritual essences  
Can never perish. Thou hast pass'd the void  
'Tween earth and this vast orb ; and know'st how swift  
Aerial nature's speed :—a thousand years  
Have I, in swifter flight, unpausing, pass'd  
On errand through the illimitable depths  
Of space,—yet felt not solitude, or fear,  
Or toil : and least of all hath corporal bulk  
Terror to us who are impalpable  
As light or sound ;—or, were we not, could take

At pleasure what stupendous form soe'er  
To match the hugest. At a thought, behold !  
The form in which thou seest me,—little more  
Than that of man,—I could dilate and lift,  
Till on the pinnacle that crowns the top  
Of that vast temple's dome I could look down,  
As now upon the crystal floor we tread ;  
Or, insufficient that, again as high  
Above that height I rise. Such as thou saw'st,  
Are on this orb what man is on the earth,  
The highest of material things :—their hands  
Have rear'd this glorious temple ; and they come  
At certain periods here to offer up  
Thanksgiving to the Infinite,—Unknown,—  
And Unapproachable ;—the One Pure Spirit."

Thus saying, the bright Nature bow'd his head,  
And veil'd with both hands his resplendent brow ;  
Then rose again and spake.—“ Myriads of years  
Have pass'd since first this fabric was ; nor time

Hath aught impair'd ; nor, while this orb endures  
Undarken'd, can it moulder : pure as light  
Its substance is ; of the same elements  
Compounded. Congregated millions joined  
In the delightful labour ; nor their aid  
Ethereal natures did disdain to lend  
For such high purpose. That majestic dome,  
In whose inverted hollow half the seas  
Of earth might find capaciousness enough  
For all their waves to thunder in, I saw,—  
Entire as now it stands,—uplifted sheer  
From off the adamantine floor, and placed  
Upon its massive, ever-during pillars.  
A thousand hands of mightiest Spirits join'd  
To bear the glorious burthen through the sky ;  
And, as it rose above them like a world,  
Th' innumerable multitudes beneath  
Stood in a breathless silence looking up  
Till the great work was finish'd ; and they saw  
The mighty round in the immense of air

Resting untouch'd, in proud security.  
Then sent they up exulting shouts ; and all  
Th' ethereal Natures gave their voice,—that earth,  
Had earth existed, might have heard th' uproar.

“ To-day is held a solemn festival :  
Those trumpets have announc'd the temple gates  
Expanded,—and, ere long, a million forms,  
Such as the three thou hast beheld, will come  
To worship here. But let us enter now.”

With that we pass'd beneath the gates ; and on,  
With lingering step, through almost endless ranks  
Of dazzling columns, and majestic arches,  
Leagues high, and fretted with all glorious hues  
Of purest and intensest light ; nor paused  
Till right beneath the centre of the dome  
We stood,—and I look'd up. But with what words,  
To earthly object likening it, shall I  
Tell of its wonders ? It appear'd, methought,

Like one vast sapphire of most delicate tint :  
Magnificent as our terrestrial sky  
To one who on some mountain's dizzy peak  
Stands breathless, and beholds the gilded clouds  
Far underneath him rolling ;—and above,  
And all around, the interminable vault  
Resting its viewless rim on lands and seas  
A thousand miles remov'd,

Yet this is nought  
To express its majesty and awfulness.  
He only who in spirit hath gone forth  
Into the infinite abyss of space,  
And seen the starry vault without a bound,  
Outspread above him,—he alone may know  
That grandeur inexpressible,—may feel  
Some portion of the spirit-sinking awe  
That fell upon me while I gaz'd. It seem'd  
As though my overwhelmed faculties  
Saw not what yet they saw : for, as I look'd  
Again, and yet again, on what before

I had oft gaz'd at, still new wonder burst  
Upon me, as at some stupendous sight  
The eye had never seen, nor thought conceiv'd.

Like one absorb'd in pleasant reverie,  
Reclin'd beside a shady brook at noon  
Of a hot summer's day ; and in his hand  
A book, on which he looks, but reads not,—borne  
In fancy far away to other climes :  
The hours pass by, but he hath mark'd them not,—  
The waters journey on unseen,—the winds  
Talk music in the leaves unheard by him :—  
Perchance some saunterer like himself hath pass'd  
The seldom-trodden way ; and marking him  
So rapt, hath deem'd him slumbering,—and gone on  
Unnotic'd :—even like such a one entranced  
I stood,—looking and wondering ;—nor what time  
Had pass'd knew aught ; nor heard a voice or step ;  
Nor any thing beheld save that vast dome  
That hung in awful majesty above,—

Astounding, yet elating, to the eye,  
As on the lost imagination comes  
The contemplation of eternity.

But, suddenly arous'd, I saw about me  
A countless multitude of godlike shapes,  
Ethereal forms, like my benignant guide ;  
And with them myriads of stupendous size,  
Such as the three I had beheld ;—and some  
Of lower stature and more delicate shape ;  
With less of majesty, but more of grace,  
And of ineffable beauty. To the first  
They look'd what lovely woman is to man :  
Nor, save at the first glance,—or when in thought  
With earthly stature measur'd,—did they seem  
Of larger mould ; for they were but a part,  
In harmony with the majestic whole.  
All that in woman we think lovely ;—all  
Of dignity, or purity, or grace,



Was theirs with tenfold charm :—the bright, mild  
eye,—

The locks of radiant gold,—the sunny brow,—  
The soft and rapturous blush,—the rosy lip,—  
The smile that maddens with delight,—the glance  
That kindles us like the first glimpse of heaven,—  
The gentleness,—the tenderness. Their robes  
Were pure as light,—of every beauteous hue :  
Their presence was divinity :—they mov'd,  
But I heard not their footsteps :—they discours'd,  
And it was more than music :—all the air  
Teem'd with delicious fragrance where they pass'd.

Now underneath that awful dome all stood ;  
A countless host of great and lovely shapes :—  
They stood in deepest silence, looking down  
With reverential lowliness, like such  
Who utter inward prayer :—on one knee then  
Sank gracefully ; and, lifting up their eyes,  
With faces radiant as the rising sun,

And voices such as round the throne of heaven  
Sing sweetest ; mellow as the softest tone  
Of plaintive nightingale, in the deep calm  
Of summer's midnight breathing from the woods ;  
Yet powerful each as the tumultuous sea,  
Or shouts of meeting armies ; thus they sang.

“ Praises to Him,—all bountiful—all good,—  
Creator of all beauty,—all delight ;  
The infinite—the everlasting God,—  
The One Pure Spirit.

He out of light, impalpable, inert,  
Created us ; and made us beautiful,  
And bade us live. Through ages undecay'd  
We joy in our existence :—pain or grief  
Comes not to us ; but ever new delight  
Meets us in all we see, and all we do.  
Who made the sapphire waves of the great deep,  
And rear'd the glittering, many-colour'd hills ?

Who bade the winds breathe fragrance and sweet  
sounds,

And cloth'd the vallies with perfumed flowers,

The trees with all delicious fruits? 'Twas he!

Praises to Him,—all bountiful—all good,—

Creator of all beauty—all delight ;

The infinite—the everlasting God,—

The One Pure Spirit.

“ Glory to Him,—omnipotent—all wise—

Only Creator—of all nature Lord,—

The omnipresent, everlasting God,—

The One Pure Spirit.

He bade the sun arise from the deep void

Of long-enduring night, and circled it

With clouds of living fire. He also made

The lesser worlds that in their orbits move

Unerringly around. The abyss of space

He spread out with his hands, and set therein  
Th' innumerable multitude of stars.  
All things are from Him,—all on Him depend :—  
He stretcheth out his hand,—and new worlds spring :  
He speaketh,—and bright suns have pass'd away.  
He only from eternity hath been ;—  
He only to eternity must be.

Glory to Him,—omnipotent—all wise—  
Only Creator—of all nature Lord,—  
The omnipresent—everlasting God,—  
The One Pure Spirit."

Thus, but with words of thrilling power, they sang ;  
And with the chorus, far above, I heard,  
Filling th' immense of that majestic vault,  
Sounds of invisible instruments :—vast harps  
Full chording now ;—now an aerial voice  
Dropping down crystal notes,—or floating round  
With a pervading power, as if the air  
Ran over with sweet sounds :—now came at once

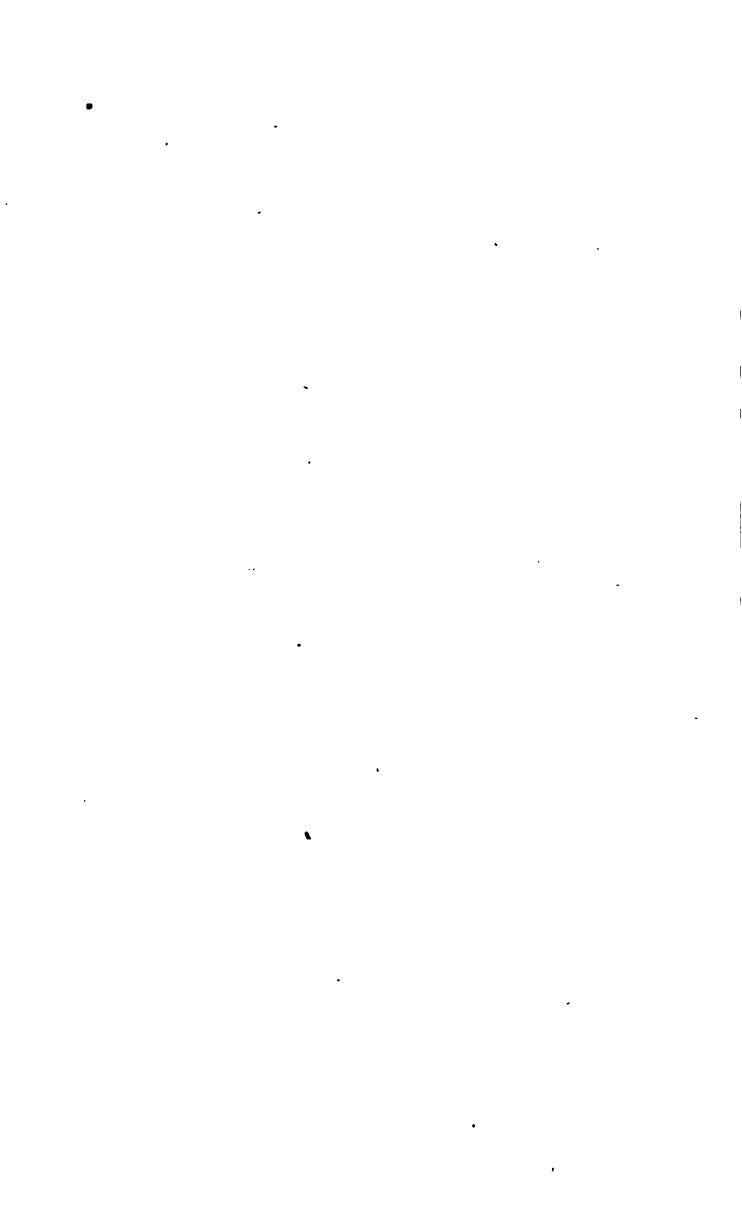
A burst as of a thousand deep-ton'd trumpets,  
That all the temple quak'd,—and then a pause  
Such as the tempest leaves when gathering up  
Its might to rage the more. Anon there rose,  
As if in the far æther, other sounds,  
Voices, and instruments, in full accord,  
Yet gentle as the breeze that o'er the meadows  
Sighs in a still May night, nor shakes the dew  
From out the bosoms of the sleeping flowers.  
Nearer and nearer rapidly it came,  
Swelling and deepening:—voices now were heard  
Chanting in harmony with those below;  
With utterance distinct, and heavenly sweet:  
And instruments of glorious tone and power,  
Such as earth knows not. Nigher still, and nigher  
The viewless choir came on:—there was a sound  
As of a tempest rushing round the dome:  
Trumpets and cymbals, crystal-ton'd,—and peals  
As of gigantic organs blowing full.  
Louder, yet louder it came on: the sounds

Deepen'd and spread like an o'erwhelming flood :—  
The million mighty voices more and more  
Arose exultingly :—th' invisible band  
Drew nigher still, and nigher. But, at once,  
Through all the eternal dome deep thunders roll'd.  
I saw, descending from its utmost height,  
A dark cloud edg'd with lightning :—sure I felt  
As if in presence of the Eternal One !  
My senses reel'd :—the mountain seem'd to shake,—  
The temple to and fro appear'd to swing,—  
The voices and the instruments grew faint,—  
Then sank at once into an awful hush !  
I saw the astonish'd millions on the floor  
Stretch'd prostrate,—and the dark cloud opening.



**DREAM CONTINUED.**





## DREAM CONTINUED.

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WE stood again on that bright mountain's brow :  
The temple gates were clos'd, and all was still.  
Then thus the Son of Ether. " I have said  
This goodly fabric shall unfading stand  
Till the great sun himself shall be extinguish'd.  
Space hath such ; orbs as bright as this, as vast,  
Have perish'd from the sky, with all the worlds  
Dependent on them. In the depths of space  
So far remov'd they lie, that, were man's life,  
From the first dawn of thought to the last hours  
Of trembling age, employ'd in summing up,  
Each minute adding millions of long leagues,

The vast extent were but an infant's span,  
Compar'd to their remoteness ! There we go.  
But with a speed far fleeter must we pass  
Than in our flight from earth. Fix now thine eye  
Upon this blazing hill, and, as it shrinks  
In distance, measure, if thou canst, our speed.  
Now we ascend !"

Scarce had he ceas'd to speak  
When, with rapidity to which the glance  
Of lightning were a slow and creeping thing,  
We darted upward,—and the enormous hill  
Was viewless.—In an instant more the sun  
Shrank to a star,—twinkled,—and died away !

The Spirit spake not yet : I could not speak.  
Astonishment, and awe, and terror, crush'd  
All faculties. I felt myself a thing  
More powerless than the scarcely visible mote  
That floats upon the sunbeam, toss'd about  
By pettiest insect's wing. But I began,

Erelong, to kindle with supreme delight ;  
Forgetting fear, and in the majesty  
Of all about me glorying. Still on !—  
On still we flew ! All constellations known  
In earthly sky were far behind us now.  
Nigh many a star, that soon became a sun,  
We darted, leaving it again a star:  
And many a streaming comet we glanced by  
Those swiftest travellers of heaven's blue road :  
Meeting or shunning us, 'it matter'd not,  
We pass'd them still the same : now in full blaze  
Of sunshine journeying—now in starry night.  
On ! on !—A thousand different firmaments  
Had met, and pass'd us, floating on each hand  
Like shining bubbles on a rapid stream.

“ These are His works,” the radiant Spirit said.  
“ Each star of all this countless multitude,  
Falling behind us in our rapid flight,  
Even like a shower of sparks from some huge fire,

Kindled at midnight on a mountain's top,  
When the wind rages—every petty star  
Is a majestic sun,—like ours, the soul  
And centre of revolving worlds. Where ends,  
If it *hath* end, this universe of suns,  
*He* only knoweth. As the adventurous man,  
In search of unknown seas and lands, puts forth  
In ships on the great deep ; so, on the vast  
Of space, ethereal natures oft have launch'd,  
To explore the immensity of worlds unknown,  
To find creation's limits. I have said,  
A thousand years, as mortals measure time,  
In flight as swift as now I have advanced,  
And found no boundary. Ten thousand years,  
And ten times multiplied, have others sped,  
And *that* hath not suffic'd :—they have gone up,  
Yet never reach'd its height ; they have gone down,  
Yet fathom'd not its depth :—before them still,  
As at the first, illimitable space,—  
Stars densely thronging still.”

The Spirit ceased,  
And we went on in silence: a deep hush—  
A long dead stillness, interrupted not,  
Save, at wide intervals, by the deep moan,  
And rush of some far comet hurrying on,  
As 'twere the heaving of stupendous wings  
Invisible, driving impetuously on through the night.

Oh! power of fancy, when the reason sleeps!  
In few short hours, how seem'd an age's span  
Compress'd! Less lengthen'd to my waking sense  
Appears the lapse from first remember'd days  
Of infancy till this, the noon of life,  
Than to the free imagination seem'd,  
In that short, pleasant dream, the stretch of time,  
While through th' immeasurable vast of space  
We urg'd our ceaseless flight. On,—on,—still on,—  
For ever with unutterable speed  
Away,—away!—and still the unnumber'd suns  
And worlds behind us fell; and others still

Approach'd,—and grew ;—and pass'd,—and wan'd,—  
    and sank ;—  
Quench'd in the infinite.

    At length again  
The Beautiful Nature spake. “ Behold !” he said,  
“ We enter in the realms of death and night !—  
True night and death are here :—the night of earth  
Is but a passing shadow ; and its death  
A change of being merely. Look ! the stars  
Are dwindling far behind us :—they are gone.—  
Darkness impierceable is all around :—  
Silence,—and death,—and undisturbed rest.

“ Hither, when first I came, methought I found  
Creation's end,—interminable night :  
Yet I held on my dark and cheerless course,  
Unbating, till amid the murky air  
I spied a huge round mass of lurid light,  
Towards which I sped, and found a darken'd sun,  
Not yet quite dark ; and there one airy shape,

The only one of its unnumber'd host  
That haunted yet its dying majesty.  
The rest to brighter suns were fled ; but he  
Linger'd awhile behind : for much he loved  
The once-magnificent orb where he had pass'd  
Almost eternal years of joy. He said,  
From my first entrance in the fields of night,  
I must have pass'd, unseen, a million such ;  
And that before me still a longer tract  
Lay ere I could again behold the light  
Of living suns :—' That fearful chasm o'ergone,  
New, glorious firmaments stretch on for aye.'

“ And then he question'd me from whence I came ;  
To what part bent my way ; and in what orb  
I made abode. Thou wilt not marvel now,  
Having beheld of the great universe  
Though but an atom in compare of what  
Even I erewhile have measur'd,—when I say



He knew not, of himself, or by report,  
Our sun or system. Couldst thou on the shore  
Of ocean number each particular sand,—  
Give it a name,—and mark it from the rest?  
As little on this ocean of all space,  
Whose sands are suns, may even the wisest know,  
Save only He, the interminable whole.  
Then the lone dweller of the desolate sphere  
Bade me behold how the majestic forms  
Once living, had pass'd off like dreams; but these  
Thyself erelong shalt see: and much he told  
Of suns, by slow decay, or sudden blight,  
Cut off:—together then we lifted up  
Our voices, praising Him, the Eternal One—  
Embrac'd and parted. On my homeward course  
I found the solitary spirit still  
Mourning the perish'd grandeur, with such grief  
As spirits feel,—a calm and holy sorrow,  
Not known to things of clay, nor to be told;

And, after a brief sojourn, when I turn'd,  
Departing for our own more happy orb,  
He journey'd by my side.

“ Lo! even now  
That awful wreck is nigh ; nor yet quite dark.  
Myriads of earthly years have pass'd away  
Since I beheld it ; yet it glimmers still.  
Seest thou not, as we pause an instant here,  
Right opposite, amid the depth of blackness,  
That huge round of dark, drear, and crimson glow,  
As 'twere a balefire for the fields of space  
Burn'd to its last red embers ? And behold !  
Even here beside us, in the dusk, dark beam,  
Dimly distinguish'd, a dependent world,  
That with its ruler perish'd :—cold and dark,—  
Lifeless and motionless,—a giant corpse  
Slowly decaying in this vault of night.  
Trees,—rivers,—oceans,—all have pass'd away,—  
Dissolv'd into their primal elements  
Imponderous,—invisible ;—and float

Hark ! how among the drear, gigantic piles,  
The echo of my low voice moans and sighs :  
How temple talks to temple ; tower to tower ;  
Dome mutters unto dome, that yet again  
Whispers it onward. We descend, and lo !  
The dim, huge forms of the departed race !  
In them alone can I behold decay ;  
Yet not as clay decayeth : they are still  
Perfect in shape and hue ; nor taint of death  
Is on them, such as makes the earthly corpse  
Ghastly and loathsome : but their mighty forms  
Have dwindled somewhat, and the solid hath  
Become like vapour. Nor, like parting clay,  
Suffer'd they fear or pain, but passed off  
In long, sweet slumber ; by the fountain side,—  
In the cool bower,—upon the mountain's brow,—  
Beside the ocean,—or upon the lake,—  
Amid the woods,—or in the scented vales,—  
In temples,—or in gardens. Wheresoe'er  
That moment found them, there they fell asleep.

Here one who touch'd this shadowy harp, belike  
To the sweet voice of her who on his breast  
Finds her last slumber. Here they held the feast  
Around the fountain ;—see !—the colour'd fruits,  
Just where they dropp'd from the relaxing hand,  
Are fresh still ; and the beautiful flowers, upheap'd  
In ruby vases, by the graceful hands  
Of these fair sleepers, seem perfumed yet.

“ All in the same hour perish'd. Tenderly  
The ethereal natures bade them to their rest.  
For they perceiv'd the doom had passed forth :  
The vast orb shook as with a mortal wound,  
And year by year flagg'd heavily : the tints  
Of the once pleasant, clear night hours grew deep,  
And deeper,—and of dense and deepest blackness,—  
And lengthen'd as they deepen'd : the bright noons  
Wan'd slowly to a dim and sickly light ;  
Age after age more sickly, and more dim,  
Till change of night and day was none,—but all

Subsided to one drear and lurid red :  
And, year by year, the planets in their course  
Loiter'd, and swerv'd, through feebleness, aside  
From their appointed path ; and darkness fell  
Slowly upon them,—a long dreary night,—  
A night of death,—a night that knew no morn,—  
And all things perish'd in them. Yet awhile  
They wander'd faintly through the murky air,  
Frozen and dead,—huge sepulchres of dead ;  
Then, one by one, stood still :—the sun stood still :—  
The system had expir'd."

#### The Shape of Light

Here ceas'd. A long and solemn pause ensued,  
And we stood gazing on the desolate orb :  
Then took our way in silence,—and again  
Voyaged along the melancholy vast—  
The burial place of systems. Night—deep night—  
Stillness—terrific solitude—dead rest !

Then thus, at length, after long silence, spake  
The Ethereal One. " Such as thou hast beheld  
Are in these regions numberless ; but they  
Perish'd not all by the same lingering course.  
Even as a torch extinguish'd in the waters,  
They have gone out. The mandate hath come forth,—  
' Be dark !'—and they are darken'd ; and all life  
Dies, and all motion ceaseth, and all sound :  
The ocean hath no waves ; the air no winds ;  
The streams no course ; the blank orb, shuddering,  
Stands still ; the whirling planets, with a jar,  
Shock—and are fix'd.

" In what far reach of time  
These terrible extinctions first began,  
Save He who all things knoweth, none can know.  
Myriads of millions of long years must pass  
Ere darkness blots them utterly from the sky :  
With utter darkness first begins decay  
Of their pure elements ; decay so slow,

Through ages more than man can comprehend,  
Our eldest Natures scarce have mark'd their wane :  
Yet when we first had being such were here ;  
Suns blank as midnight,—totally extinct ;  
Their adamantine substance melted down  
Almost to shadow ; their dependent worlds  
Gone—gone like dew-drops of thy earth's first morn.  
We pause : thou dost not feel on what we tread ;  
Thou canst see nothing ; yet beneath our feet  
Is the thin shadow of an aged sun ;  
The waters of its oceans all dried up ;  
Its mountains wither'd ; and its hardest rocks  
Become impalpable as air.

“ Where fleet

Their viewless atoms,—who can tell ? Perchance,  
Departing hence, they brighten other suns,  
Or hinder their decay :—expanded wide  
Through the vast ether, do they only wait  
The fiat—‘ Be ye light ! ’—to rush again,  
And kindle to new glories ?—or have these

Magnificent spheres, like the weak insect race,  
Born in the morning, perishing at eve,  
Their hour inevitable fix'd to shine,  
And fall away in darkness?—Who shall say?

“ Again we cleave the fathomless obscure :  
From sun to perish'd sun we glance ; and yet  
Darkness is far before us. On !—yet on !—  
Millions of blacken'd systems are behind !  
Myriads of millions are before us still !

“ But He who hath destroy'd can re-create.  
In empty space and darkness, suddenly  
We have beheld a cloud of pearly light ;  
And all about, to infinite extent,  
The ether thickening like a radiant mist ;  
Working tumultuously,—and round, and round,  
Rushing in endless circles,—wheel in wheel.  
Anon the pearly cloud becomes a sphere ;



Condenses—brightens—glows—revolves—expands—  
Flashes—and burns—and darts excessive light,—  
And grasps the kindled ether as it rolls,  
Turning it all to fire ; and round and round,  
Swifter and faster vehemently whirls and burns,  
And gathers prodigious bulk,—till lo !—it is a sun !

“ Then gradually the blazing wheel stands still :  
And the great mass of mingled light begins  
To break into its primal elements.  
Thou hast beheld the sky of earth at dawn,  
Or close of summer's day, when like a sea  
Of fiery waves it shows ; a thousand hues  
Mingling and tossing with incessant change :  
Billows of ruby over golden billows  
Flowing, and ebbing back ; and crimson waves  
'Gainst purple surges work'd to fiery froth :  
Thus—but with glory beyond all compare—  
The radiant elements of light ferment,

And break in clouds of inconceivable splendour.  
Masses of purple, ruby, golden flame,  
Condense, and grow to mountains of all gems.  
Here the mild emerald rays unite,—and see !  
Green valleys, forests, plains, and gentle hills ;  
Trees with ripe fruit, and blossoms,—flowers in bud  
And bloom together springing. And lo ! here  
The sapphire clouds in mighty volume rolling,  
Wave over wave ; and, as the tumult stays,  
See other waves;—a boundless ocean heaving,  
Trying its strength 'gainst all its sounding shores.  
Now from the hills the silver torrents pour,  
And work their untried path along the plains :  
Birds of all beauteous shape, and gorgeous hue,  
Wing suddenly athwart the fragrant air :  
Forth from the ground start up at once, full-form'd,  
Majestic animals of immortal mould :  
And last of all, and noblest, lo ! the light  
Thickens, and gathers in unnumber'd heaps,

Like clouds of brightest fire, that from their height  
Descend with gentle motion to the ground ;  
There rest,—and from the solid element  
Exhaling a pure portion, with it mix,  
And give vitality. Anon, behold !  
Even as we gaze, the beams condense, and take  
Solidity and shape, though undefined  
As yet, and dim with bright mist circumfused.  
But more and more the growing forms appear :  
By glimpses we discern a seeming limb  
Of heavenly mould,—a gently waving flame  
That images a flow of golden tresses ;—  
A momentary gleam, as of a face  
Glowing with heavenly lustre :—yet again,—  
And still again,—and brighter,—and more sure  
With every look the forming shapes appear ;  
Till rapidly at length the misty veils  
Dissolve,—and lo ! in gentle sleep reclined,

A new creation,—pure and beautiful :  
Forms like our own,—majestic and immortal.

“ Not long they slumber : with one impulse rising,  
Conscious of life,—and love,—and gratitude  
To Him that hath created them, they lift  
Their voices in instinctive harmony,  
Adoring and thanksgiving. And with theirs  
Join other voices, coming from afar :—  
For, kindling up the ether as they fly,  
Millions of new-created essences,—  
Creatures of purest light,—ethereal shapes,—  
All fresh and radiant from their Maker's hand,  
Hasten exulting toward their destin'd sphere.

“ The glorious orb is finish'd ; but as yet  
Hangs in the still air motionless :—as yet  
Th' attendant worlds are not. Profoundest awe  
Sinks in all hearts ;—the voice of praise is hush'd ;—

The mute adorer pauses in suspense :—  
Midway the torrent stays his headlong stream :—  
The winds are lock'd :—the rolling seas lie still :—  
Thronging the ether, countless multitudes  
Of airy shapes look on with holy joy.

“ Then suddenly in the far air appear,  
Illustrious in the light of their first morn,  
The new-created planets ; and by each  
Its tributary orbs, like starry lamps  
Suspended. Still the mighty system sleeps :—  
The last great word is wanting. Lo ! it comes !  
The small still voice :—creation hears !—the sun  
Starts forth, rejoicing in his strength, to run  
His endless course through the majestic heaven :—  
The planets know their orbits :—and with songs  
Exultant,—and a million quiring harps  
Of airy essences attended,—take their way,  
Rolling in rapture on through the ethereal blue.

Then all the new-created race, and all  
The innumerable host of spiritual shapes  
Burst forth in chorus, praising and adoring  
Him,—the Omnipotent,—All-wise,—All-good,—  
Who was from everlasting,—and shall be  
To everlasting:—the Invisible,—  
The Unapproachable—the Great Unknown—  
The One Pure Spirit.”——

The Beautiful Nature ceased: I heard no more  
The music of his voice, to which all sounds  
That earth has sweetest seem untuned and harsh.  
Yet on methought we went through the immense  
Of death and darkness,—a long flight of years:  
But then confusion on my vision came;  
One moment I seem'd lost, yet knew not how;  
Speechless and motionless:—now toward me came  
A multitude of mighty shapes, whose forms,  
As earnestly I gazed, for ever changed,

As if to mock me— Now like things of light  
And power they mov'd, treading on crimson clouds,  
To songs of gladness striking golden harps ;  
And now they pass'd dejectedly away,  
Gloomy and dim as the moon's darken'd orb.  
Now through a firmament of brilliant suns  
I seem'd to voyage with some heavenly thing,  
Whom yet I could not see ;—and then, anon,  
Lo every fire was quenched, and all space  
Was one illimitable flood of waters :  
Above me, to eternity, all ocean :—  
Beneath and round me ocean, shoreless—bottomless—  
Heaving in utter night its measureless waves !  
And then again methought I found myself  
Circling the disk of some enormous sphere,  
That now appear'd a sun,—and now a ball  
Of fiercest fire, roaring outrageously ;—  
And now a cold,—dim,—dreary,—shapeless heap,  
Mouldering away in night and solitude.

But then once more I travell'd the abyss  
Of darken'd space with that celestial shape.  
Away—away we went :—he spake no more ;  
But turn'd for ever his irradiate face  
Upon me with a look of heavenly beauty,  
Not to be told ;—oh ! never to be lost.  
I gaz'd—and gaz'd,—it seem'd for years I gaz'd,—  
And to eternity had wish'd to gaze  
On that ineffable divinity :  
But, as some bright star slowly fades away,  
Melting to nothing in the beam of morning,  
So gradually that heavenly vision fled  
From my desiring eye. I look'd,—and look'd ;—  
'Twas faint,—and dim,—and dimmer ;—and the  
hand  
That still grasp'd mine felt like the touch of air.

There came in the dark vast a milky spot :—  
'Twas now a pearly cloud :—'twas now a mist



Of silvery light:—Oh! 'twas a firmament  
Boundless,—and glowing with unnumber'd stars!

The Beautiful Spirit smil'd, and pointed up,—  
Then melted into ether. Instantly  
I seem'd to pass away, like a thin cloud  
In the blue sky at noon, that leaves no trace  
Where it hath been. All after was a blank,  
A dead pause in the flight of time, as life  
Had been for years suspended.

I awoke,

And knew not where, or what I was: but soon  
The glorious vision I had seen return'd  
Upon me; and I thought again to look  
On the majestic Spirit that had led me  
Through earth and heaven; and to behold once  
more  
The glittering mountains, and the boundless plains

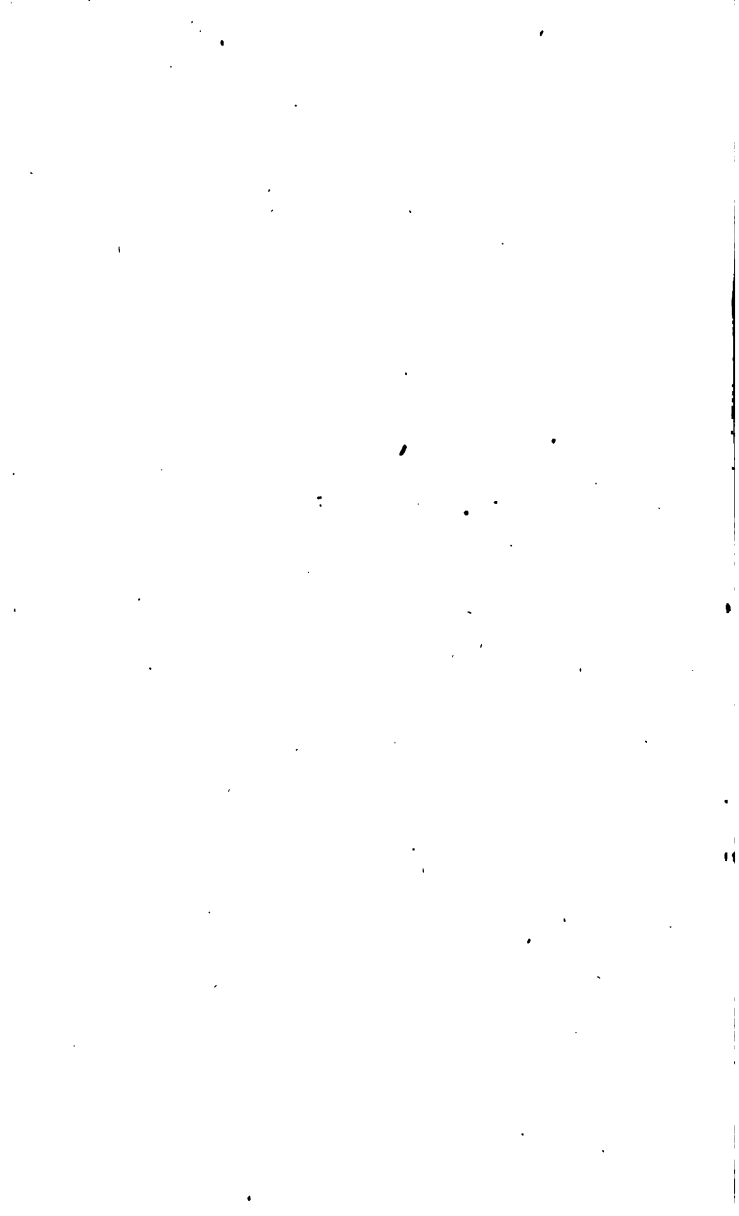
And oceans of the sun :—with that I turn'd,  
And op'd my eyes :——and found myself on earth.

The sea was whispering quietly beneath ;  
The evening breeze was on the hills :—and lo !—  
Just touching on the rim of the wide waters,—  
The sun himself,—sinking in lonely grandeur.

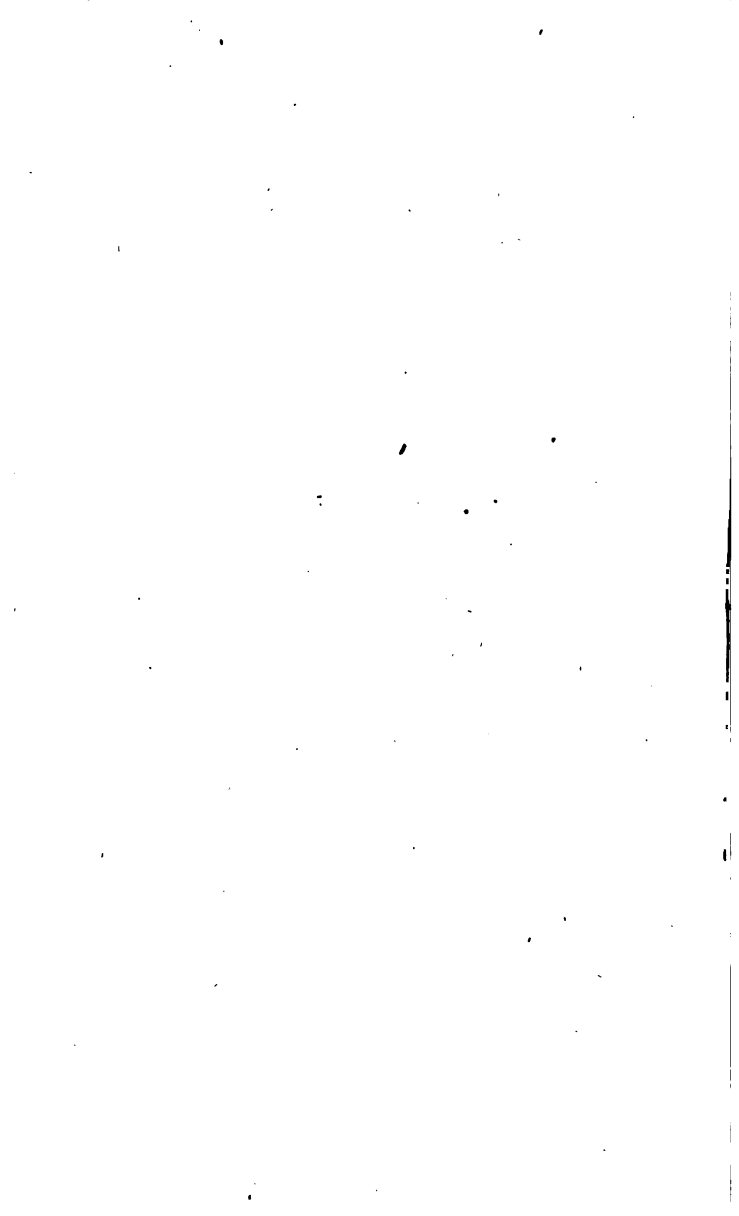
THE END.

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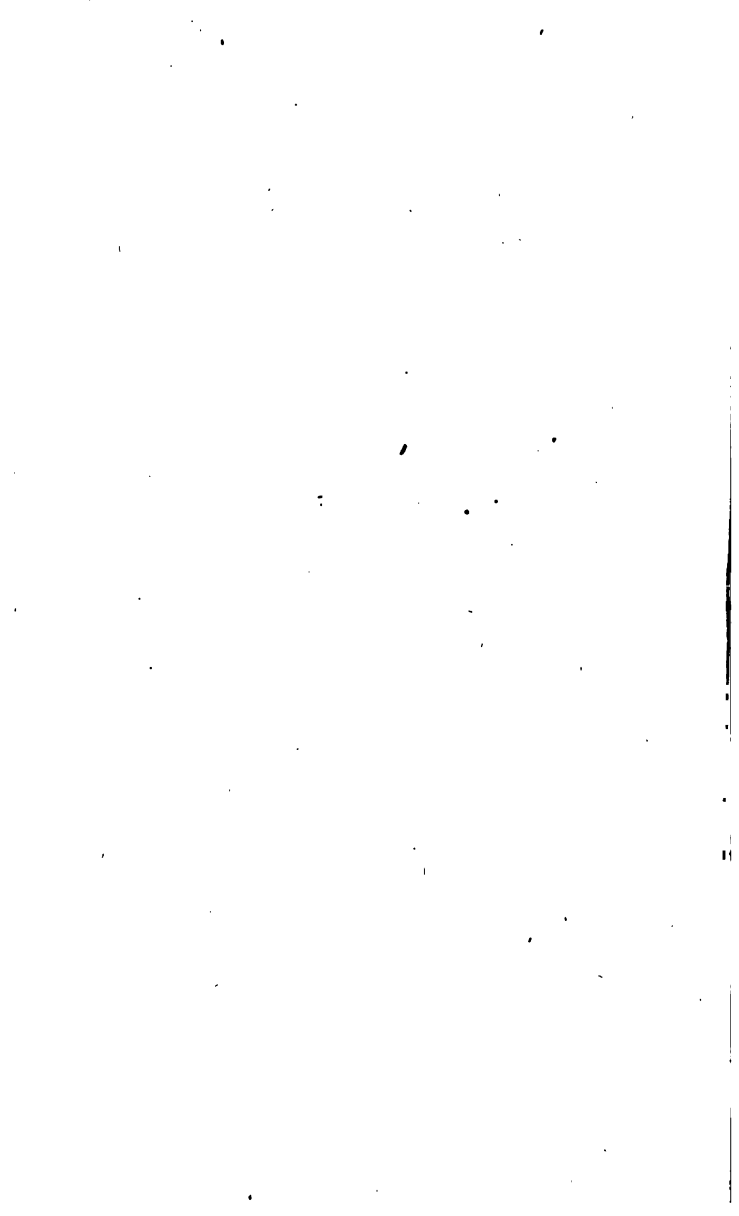








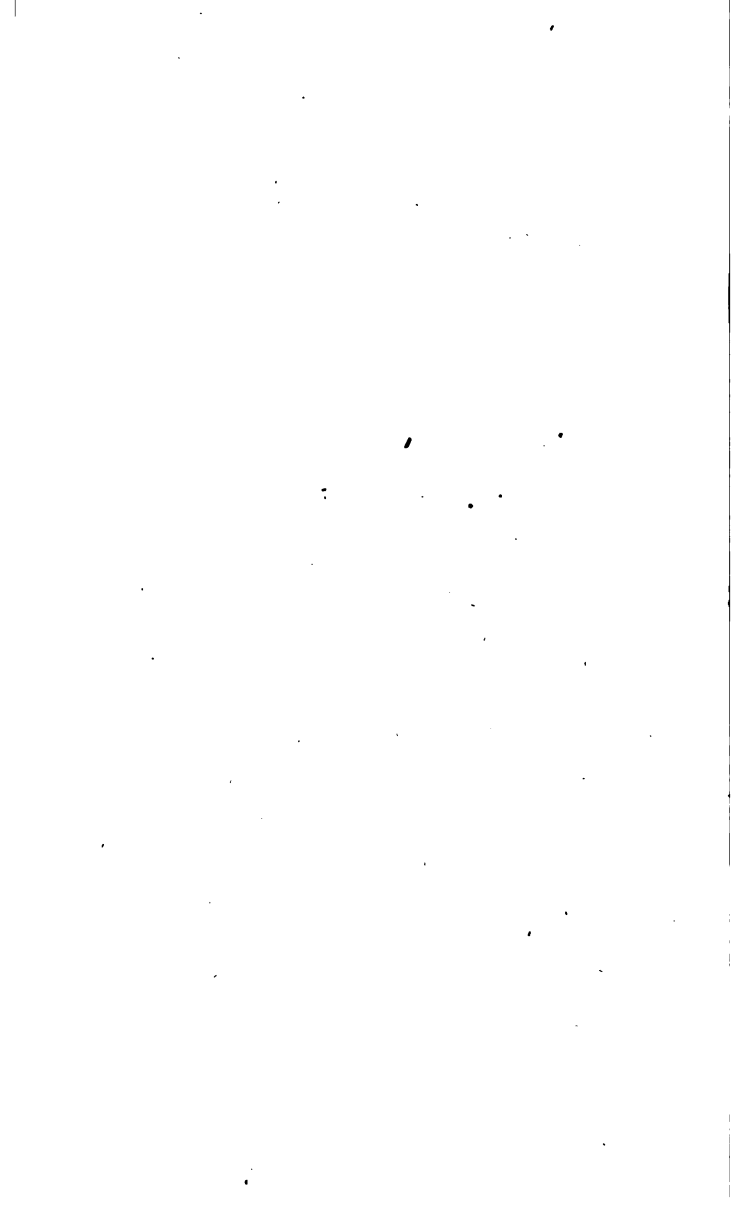


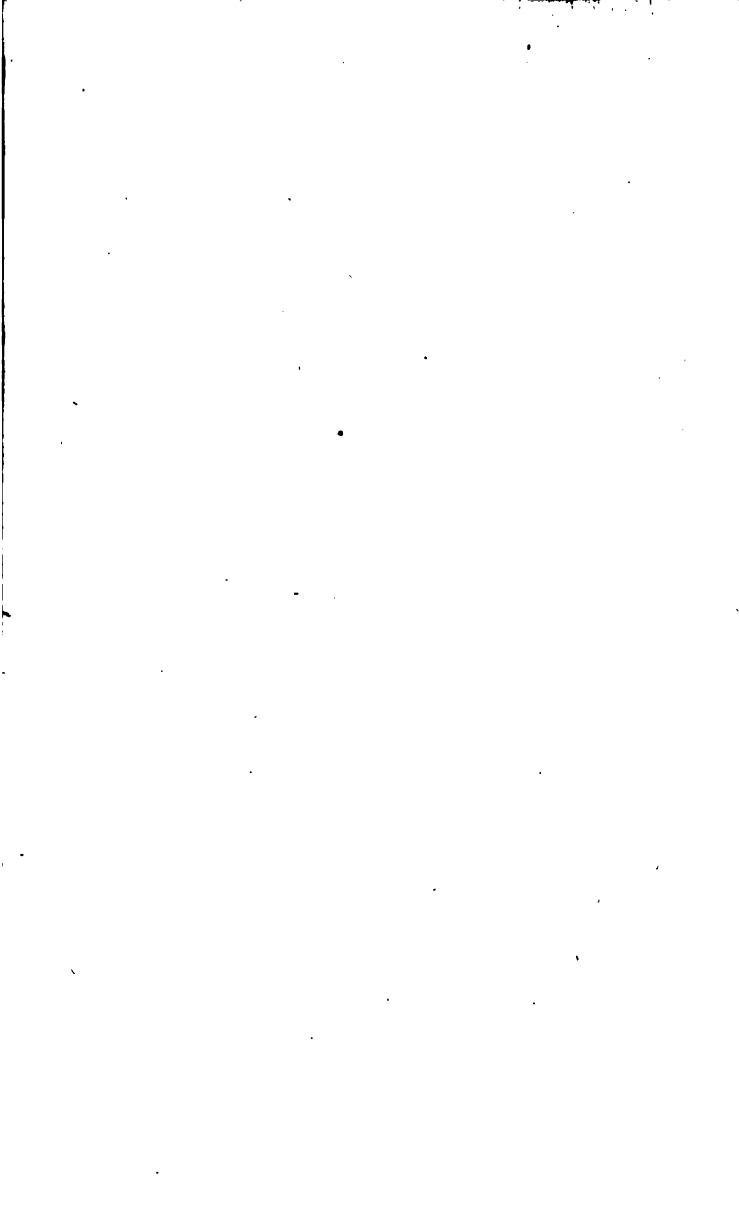


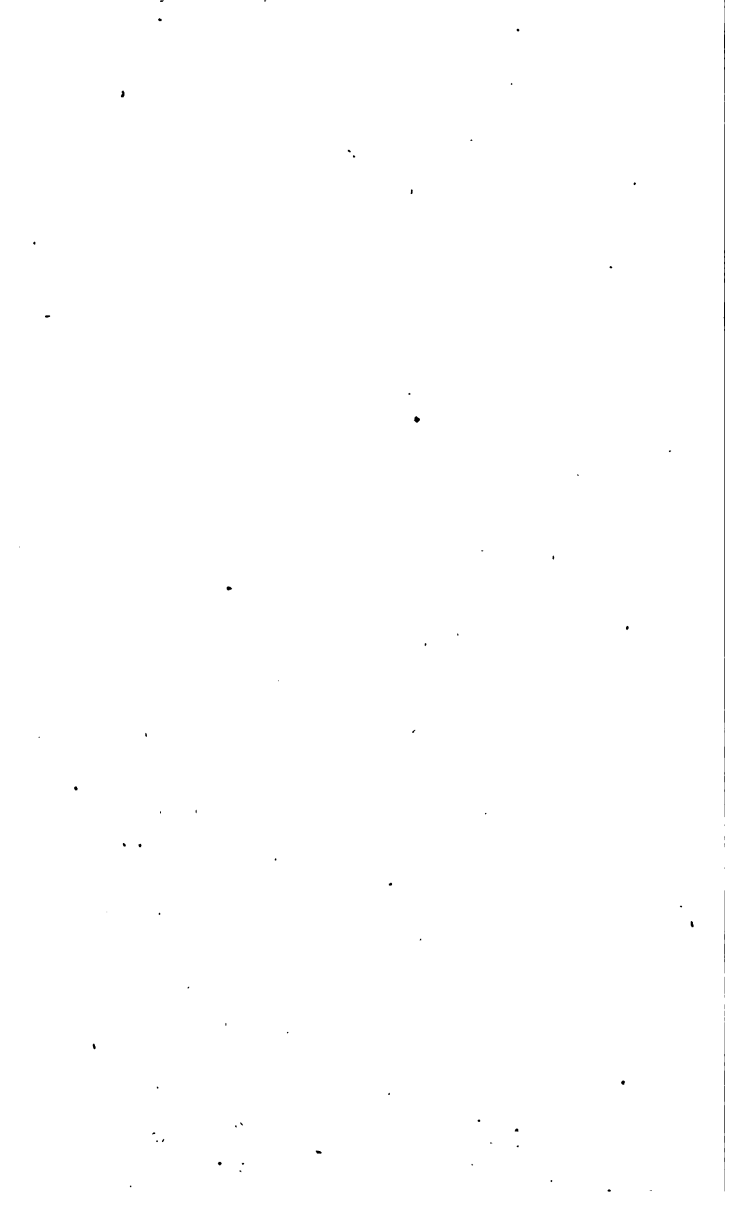


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